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AUTHOR Nordhaus, Mary
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ABSTRACT

Educators and policymakers in New Mexico are aware that far too many at-risk children do poorly in school, drop out, or perform poorly even if they graduate. In July 1990, the Rockefeller Foundation provided funds for a pilot "New Mexico Academy for School Leaders." The academy brought together 34 elementary school principals, teachers, parents, educational assistants, and community members to bring about fundamental restructuring of schools to benefit children at risk. The University of New Mexico operated the academy for 4 weeks, with followup activities during the fall. The academy grew out of beliefs that: (1) schools are not responding effectively to many at-risk children; (2) participatory leadership activities that include the teachers, parents, and principal can enhance school effectiveness for at-risk kids; and (3) if schools are to make the changes necessary for improving the education of at-risk children, new approaches to staff development are required. The academy's formative evaluator presents observations and interpretations of the work that preceded the academy, the summer experience itself, and the followup activities through the end of 1990. The academy's curriculum outline is appended. (LAP)

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Let There Be Change In Schools And Let It Begin With Me

A Report on the 1990 New Mexico Academy for School Leaders

Mary Nordhaus
Bureau of Educational Planning and Development
University of New Mexico
March 1991

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Preface

The Rockefeller Foundation provided funds for a pilot "New Mexico Academy for School Leaders" operated by the University of New Mexico for four weeks during July 1990, with follow-up activities during the fall. The accompanying reports, prepared by the Academy's formative evaluator, presents observations and interpretations of the work which preceded the Academy, the summer experience itself, and the follow-up activities through the end of 1990. School activities undertaken during the spring of 1991 are presented in the supplemental report included in this volume.

The Academy grew out of beliefs that (1) schools are not responding effectively to many at-risk children, (2) school effectiveness for at-risk children can be enhanced through participatory leadership activities which include not only the principal but also teachers and parents, and (3) new approaches to staff development are required if schools are to make the changes necessary for improving the education of at-risk children. Rockefeller Foundation support provided an opportunity for the design, implementation, and evaluation of a program built on these beliefs. However, responsibility for the design and operation rests with its staff. The Foundation was wonderfully interested and supportive, but never directed or interfered in our work.

In order to maximize opportunities to learn from our experience, we engaged Mary Nordhaus as a full-time formative evaluator. As she notes in the accompanying reports, Ms. Nordhaus utilized a wide variety of data sources. To an extent probably greater than she knows, the data elicited by Ms. Nordhaus had major effects on the evolution of the Academy. Dr. Roberta Smith (Academy Coordinator) and Professor David Colton (Project Director) learned to appreciate Ms. Nordhaus' extraordinary ability to elicit data which provided useful context for decisions about Academy design and adjustment. If we were unable or unwilling to interpret or apply data wisely or promptly, responsibility lies within our own preconceptions and experiences and judgements, and in the real-world constraints that inevitably impinge on enterprises such as this one. The accompanying reports provide an important perspective on the New Mexico Academy for School Leaders. We hope that readers will profit from Ms. Nordhaus' observations -- as we have.

Roberta Smith
Coordinator

David Colton
Director

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Introduction

A priority for most school personnel is the negotiation of the school day -- teaching, responding, assessing, relating, mediating, planning, providing -- for children, families, for self, the district, and community. The New Mexico Academy for School Leaders added a conceptual dimension to all these jobs, that of fundamental restructuring to benefit children at risk.

During a four week summer Academy, thirty-four elementary school principals, teachers, parents, educational assistants and community members focused their attention on forming school leadership teams to effect school restructuring. It was an intense experience. Beliefs were challenged and old perspectives were shaken. Participants seemed compelled by new ideas and stimulated by new friendships to immerse themselves in their work, five days a week, sometimes eighteen hours a day. Operating on information overload and lack of sleep, but bolstered by novel ways of working, elementary school teams were challenged to weigh alternatives and form new understandings. Weekends barely provided time to breathe before teams set out once again to tackle restructuring.

Movement toward restructured schools has not been a smooth, gradual process spearheaded by teams of sophisticated peer leaders. It is more often characterized by the jerky time-tables of novice change agents, those part-time leaders, who like most good teachers, wear commitment on their sleeves and rob their personal lives of precious time. They find restructuring work is easily if temporarily side-tracked. The demands of septic systems, district mandates, muddy playgrounds, and personal agendas take their toll. But restructuring work, once begun, is also hard to deny. It is continued through the perseverance of collegial support, midnight brainstorms, individual skills, and personal commitment. In some sites the work of restructuring has been exhilarating and exhausting. In others it has been divisive and dreaded.

This document is written in the hope that it will provide a walk through the schoolscape of six New Mexico elementary teams as they move toward restructuring. For some schools the walk is lit by the clarity of success resulting when diverse paths converge. For others it is a walk along old ways so well marked there has been little chance for digression.

Background

In September of 1989, David Colton, Dean of the College of Education at the University of New Mexico, was awarded a planning grant by the Rockefeller Foundation to investigate the feasibility of creating a 1990 summer leadership academy for public school personnel. Working with Roberta Smith, the academy planners convened an advisory council made up of educators, business representatives, state officials, and parents of New Mexico school children. The council was asked to assist in developing a conceptual framework for the proposed academy.

The envisioned purpose of the academy was to develop school leadership teams and provide support for restructuring schools in order to benefit children at risk. Three themes would define the proposed curriculum: 1. the cultural/language sources of risk for children and families in the Southwest and strategies for converting risk factors into educational assets, 2. participatory leadership and restructuring to include not only principals but teachers and parent/community involvement, and 3. strategies for fundamentally transforming the character and purposes of individual schools.

Although feasibility for the project was established and a proposal for full funding was submitted, David Colton and Roberta Smith remained aware of the uncertain nature of the undertaking. The fact it was a pilot project meant living with some ambiguity. It meant developing a model even if it was not perfect, it meant forging ahead with plans but being willing to change them if the need arose, it meant living with the unknown constraints of the public school world. While they sensed the importance of many ideas which would be central to the project (i.e., components of James Comer's interagency collaboration and parent and community involvement), they could not be certain how these would relate to the needs of selected sites.

The proposal included detailed planning for the summer Academy. Relying heavily on the committee's suggestions David Colton and Roberta Smith designed the New Mexico Academy for School Leaders as a four week long, residential forum for the development and education of selected school-community leadership teams. Objectives of the NMASL were centered on: developing leadership cadres sensitive to multicultural issues and adept at diagnosing and designing quality education for children at risk; developing group process skills within these cadres as the necessary tools for leading restructuring efforts within the schools; developing specific plans

appropriate for each school community to be implemented during the following school year. By the fall of 1990 NMASL designers hoped to place school-community leadership teams in each of the selected schools, to have them begin a child-oriented process of restructuring schools which would provide equitable and excellent educational opportunities to all children, to provide support and assistance for the work of the restructuring teams, and to document the process in order to help inform other restructuring efforts.

A Rockefeller Foundation operational grant was awarded to the University's Bureau of Educational Planning and Development (BOEPAD) in December 1989. In the spring of 1990 invitations for applications were sent out to New Mexico school districts. Fifteen schools were identified as possible participants in the pilot academy. To be considered, the schools had to submit a letter of application which included the approval of their superintendent. In March of 1990 the advisory committee selected six elementary schools to participate in the initial summer session. These schools were asked to conduct a needs assessment in their school communities and select a team of six people to attend the Academy. The team was to include school staff, a parent representative, and an administrator.

Description of Schools and Team Selection

Ann Parish Elementary, Los Lunas School District

Ann Parish Elementary serves a small community. Located just south of Albuquerque, New Mexico's largest city, Los Lunas is a community in the midst of transformation from old rural ways to suburban life. At the time of application to NMASL this school had a population of over 800 students in grades K-4. The district was in the process of building a new elementary to relieve overcrowding at Ann Parish. At the end of the school year half the staff was identified to move and a new principal was selected for Ann Parish.

In the fall of 1990 Ann Parish opened with approximately 400 students. The population is approximately 49% Anglo, 48% Hispanic, with other minorities representing less than 2% of the student body. Ann Parish is a Chapter I school with 62% of the student body qualifying for free or reduced lunch. The staff of 42 has 26 certified and 16 non-certified personnel.

Ann Parish was selected by the district administration to apply for the NMASL on the basis of its high risk population. Team members report that team selection was voluntary; all staff who were interested and could work out the logistics of attending a four week, residential summer academy could

apply. The team -- the principal, three regular classroom teachers, one special education teacher, and one educational assistant (the team's parent representative) -- includes all interested volunteers remaining at Ann Parish after the school divided.

Bayard Elementary, Cobre Consolidated School District

Bayard Elementary School is located in a rural mining community in the southwest part of the state. It is one of four elementary schools in the Cobre Consolidated School district and the largest K-5 elementary with an enrollment of 372. There are 22 classroom teachers on a staff of 32. The student body is 90.24% Hispanic, 9.73% Anglo, .03% Native American. Bayard is a Chapter I school, with 64% of the students qualifying for free lunch programs.

Information about the NMASL was disseminated to staff through a memo from the principal. Those people interested in attending notified the principal. All interested staff were also members of the school's Building Committee, a committee which acted in an advisory capacity to the principal. This was an open committee although it had a predictable and stable membership. Initially some other staff were interested but they were unable to commit to four weeks during the summer. The principal, four classroom teachers, and one educational assistant, who is also the parent representative, make up the team.

Chaparral Elementary School, Albuquerque Public Schools

Chaparral Elementary, a very large K-5 elementary school, with a student body of 889, has 63 certified staff members out of a total staff of 132. This school has a side-by-side component which serves seventy-seven variously disabled children in twenty-two different areas of special need. The school serves a primarily middle class population on the fast growing west side of the city. The 1989-90 student body was: Hispanic 50.2%, Anglo 39.9%, Native American 4.1%, Black 5.2%, Asian 0.4%. The school has a Title IV tutor to provide services for its urban Native American students.

Chaparral, one of two Professional Development Schools in the Albuquerque Public School system, was completing the second full year of an on-going restructuring process. When information about the New Mexico Academy for School Leaders reached the school it was disseminated to the

faculty by the Professional Development School Committee, a standing committee of the School Improvement Team (SIT). A committee of teachers interested in attending the Academy submitted a letter of interest. They also approached the NMASL staff and asked permission to make application with a "restructured" team (one without an administrator) which they felt was in keeping with their new school structure and decision making process.

A staff task force was charged with developing a process and selecting a team. Initially the task force had thirteen members but by the second meeting the number of people interested and able to commit to a four week long summer session and a leadership role in the fall had dwindled to five. The five who remained formed the team which is made up of of three classroom teachers, one of whom is the parent representative, a bilingual teacher, and the school librarian. This team also had two adjunct members. One, an employee of Sandia National Laboratories and program manager for the Albuquerque Public Schools Science Advisor Program (SCIAD),[1] joined this team and participated as an active member for the majority of the summer session. The other member was a parent who joined the group while the Academy met in Albuquerque.

Emerson Elementary School, Albuquerque Public Schools

Emerson, the other Professional Development School, serves a large and diverse school population of 730 in grades K-5. The 1989-90 school population was 51.5% Hispanic, 22.5 % Anglo,15.6 % Native American, 5.8 % Black, and 4.3% Asian. The school has an 87.5% mobility rate and is a Chapter I school with approximately 82.4% of the students qualifying for the free lunch program. The total staff is 81 people, with 51 certified employees. The school also has two pre-school programs for 3 and 4 year olds and an English as a Second Language (ESL) program.

The Academy team was selected at Emerson through a process of the Professional Development School Improvement Team (PDSIT). After discussion by the PDSIT, a group open to all staff, a committee was formed to develop a set of criteria for applicants. The criteria stated the applicant must: have worked at the school for at least two years; intend to remain there for at least another year; have been involved in the ongoing change process; agree to provide leadership for one year following the NMASL. A simple majority

[1]The SCIAD program releases scientists from the national laboratory to work as science advisors in elementary school around New Mexico.

vote by the faculty completed the selection process. Two alternates were also selected. The team is made up of the assistant principal, two regular classroom teachers, two special education teachers, and an educational assistant, again also the parent representative.

Legion Park/ Los Niños, Las Vegas City School District

Las Vegas is a small town in rural northern New Mexico. Legion Park Elementary School, a small school, is temporarily housed for the year in another newly constructed K-3 school, Los Niños Elementary. While the Legion Park building is being remodeled, the staff and students of Legion Park and those newly hired for Los Niños work as one school, with the Legion Park principal. In June of 1991, the Legion Park principal and 11 teachers will return to their home school to a projected population of approximately 250 students.

At present Legion Park/Los Niños serves a student population of 485 children. Approximately one-third live in low income housing projects. The student body is predominantly Hispanic, with an Anglo population of about 15%. The school has one Black and one Asian student. Approximately 75% of the students qualify for free or reduced lunch programs. In addition, forty-five 2nd and 3rd graders, are served by Chapter I. The total staff numbers 41, with 20 certified personnel and 13 classroom paraprofessionals.

Team selection was made by the principal at Legion Park before the move. The principal selected five people, "a representative group from the school staff," to attend. The principal, five classroom teachers, and an educational assistant are on the team.

Tombaugh Elementary School, Las Cruces Public Schools

Tombaugh Elementary is in the rural Mesilla Valley south and west of Las Cruces. This school, designed for 500 children, opened in the fall following the 1990 NMASL to a population much larger than projected. Four new teachers were hired during the first month of school. The school has a population of 673 students and 31 teachers on a staff of 43. The student body is approximately 56% Hispanic, 43% Anglo. The children of foreign graduate students at New Mexico State University make up about 1% of other minorities. Tombaugh is a Chapter I school with 51% of the students qualifying for free and reduced lunches.

During the spring and early summer of 1990, the new principal selected

staff from throughout the district. The principal announced the opportunity to apply for the Academy to her new hires and asked for volunteers. The team was selected through a process of attrition. All those who wanted to attend and were able to became team members. The team has two classroom teachers, one special education teacher, and the principal. The parent representative is one of the classroom teachers. When this team arrived at the Academy they had not yet worked together since after their hiring at Tombaugh they remained in their respective schools until the end of the 1989-90 school year.

Pre-Academy Activities

During the spring of 1990 a member of the NMASL staff visited each school at least once. Superintendents were interviewed to assure that the districts would be supportive of the changes which would be occurring in their schools. Meetings were held with the entire faculty at each of the selected sites to inform them of the purpose of the Academy and to solicit from them perceptions of the needs of their schools and students.

After participant selection was completed at each school, Academy staff held meetings with the teams. One purpose of these meetings was to inform team members of their responsibilities to the project and have them sign letters of agreement. Participants also were asked to synthesize the information from their schools' needs assessment, to continue surveying parents, to identify potential resources within their community, to define topics of study which were appropriate to their communities and schools, and to identify decision making processes and key players within their schools. Teams were also asked to prepare a case study of one child whom they considered to be at risk. These case studies would be presented during the Academy. Each Academy participant was asked to submit a short autobiography. In addition all participants were asked to be prepared to make a fifteen minute presentation during the summer session in an area of interest or expertise.

Curriculum

The Academy staff finalized the curriculum for the summer Academy using data collected from each school site and developed an evaluation plan. The design of a four week, intensive, residential academy lent itself well to

the development of thematic strands within the curriculum.[2] The themes responded to both the suggestions of the advisory committee and the target sites' needs assessments. Two factors which surfaced in the assessments were the need for closer ties to social service agencies and the need for increased parental involvement. Because the work of Dr. James Comer addresses both these issues, it was decided the Comer process should be introduced early in the program.

The first week was held in Taos because the location was removed from any of the selected school sites and the participants could work with little distraction. Week one was devoted to beginning the process of team building, learning and practicing group process skills, and developing an understanding of the characteristics of at risk students. Personnel from the Prince George's County, Maryland, school district which was implementing the Comer process, introduced Dr. Comer's work as a team approach to dealing with at risk student issues. An Albuquerque parent empowerment project served as an example of one method of integrating all elements of this type of approach to meeting the needs of at risk children. New Mexico educators provided background on contributing risk factors and on existing programs for at risk youngsters.

During the next three weeks the Academy was held in or near the pilot schools' communities in order that school board members, district administrators, teachers, parents, and community members could participate in the sessions and interact with the team members. At each site visitors from these groups joined the Academy activities.

During week two the participants met in Las Cruces. Following the themes of the first week the Academy expanded its view of the at risk student by examining the cultural issues which could cause misalignment of the home and school. Presenters from the Hispanic and Native American communities shared their insights with the participants. These presenters explained strategies for increasing parent involvement, especially as they related to parents from minority groups. An additional presentation by one of the participants examined, "The African American Experience in the Curriculum".

Two state administrators, the Superintendent of Schools and the Secretary of Human Services, served on a panel which explored ways of combining resources for the benefit of the school children. In a frank exchange which followed, the state administrators and representatives of local social service

[2] The program for the 1990 NMASL including the curriculum is in the appendix.

agencies heard school personnel express both anger and frustration with the existing system. Concerns included a general lack of communication and problems with follow-up after referrals were made. The resulting discussion focused on possibilities for changing the way in which services are offered.

The third week, set in Albuquerque, focused on site based management and a variety of instructional strategies. Wide-ranging presentations introduced different instructional models known to be successful with at risk kids. Team members explored and analyzed the ideas and compiled suggestions to take back to their sites where staff could have input into curricular restructuring appropriate to individual schools.

Week four, scheduled in Las Vegas, was divided into two parts. The first focused on the study of the complex nature of organizational change processes and offered suggestions and strategies to ameliorate barriers to change. The second part of the week was devoted to team planning time for the design of individual school improvement plans. Participants wrote scenarios describing their restructured school and plotted systematic steps which were necessary to attain their goals. As a final activity each team devised an action plan for the first three months of the 1990-91 school year.

A curricular outline of the sort described above belies the complexity of the experience for the Academy participants which developed in the interaction between the offered curriculum and the lived curriculum. Remarking on the impact of the offered curriculum (these data were gathered through questionnaires and journal entries), participants report the experience caused them to question their beliefs, to examine what they knew about children and schooling, and to re-examine values and accepted ways of doing school business.

Data reveal the offered/lived curriculum interaction was personally empowering as well as validating. Discussion of "sensitive" topics with diverse group members heightened individual awareness and placed a high value on different perspectives. Participants' perception of themselves as "capable and professional" helped participants feel "rejuvenated and excited" about returning to their school sites. Interaction with participants from around the state and "input sessions with national figures" noticeably broadened team members' knowledge base about schooling for children at risk. This increased knowledge base provided the participants with a "new outlook on teaching and learning".

Participants perceive two broad realizations as the direct result of the lived curriculum: 1) if there is be a fundamental change in the way children are

taught, school systems must empower teachers and include staff and community personnel in decision making about children's education; and 2) meaningful change comes about as the result of allowing those involved in the education of children to discover for themselves the power of shared decision making and collaborative work. Both understandings had an impact on the manner in which the school teams viewed their roles as school leaders and approached their faculty. No team saw their action plan as "the answer". Instead they were scrupulously careful to present the plan to their schools as one idea among many, as a point of departure for a discussion, or as a personal commitment to better education for at risk children. Teams also understood the necessity of allowing their faculties the time to explore and define their own understandings about children at risk and the role of the schools.

As the offered curriculum engaged participants in discussion of the complexities of organizational change, the reality of acting as school leaders became the focus of the lived curriculum for most participants. Worries were voiced about returning to schools and about how faculties would perceive them. In journals and in conversation, people noted increasing awareness of the obstacles which might need to be faced at their sites. Inundated with information and excited about new ideas the teams expressed amazement at their personal and collective understandings and nervousness about how to relate those to a school staff which had not shared in their summer experience.

Although the offered curriculum addressed group facilitation and school leadership in a very intense and direct way throughout the summer session, participants remained concerned about the leadership portion of their new roles. For most people the work in team building became a concrete example of their capabilities as problem solvers and a practice session for their developing facilitation skills, but doubts still remained. In sites where the teams were quickly immersed in addressing restructuring many concerns were alleviated. Most found their enthusiasm was contagious and they had the interest and support of their staff. Participants also discovered that peers appreciated their work and that they had developed leadership skills.

However, in one site, conflict divided the school staff and the Rockefeller team has not been able to organize a way to involve the staff. Several Academy participants note continued concern about their skills and question whether they received the necessary preparation. Because this team also experienced substantial conflict during the summer session the offered curricular activities provided them with little successful practice.

Evaluation

In June 1990, I joined David Colton and Roberta Smith to prepare the internal evaluation of the summer academy and the subsequent follow-up activities. Because of the pilot nature of the project, this part of the evaluation component was necessarily formative. In designing an evaluation plan, two approaches appeared most likely to provide optimum information and allow timely changes in program or follow-up activities. Acting as a participant-observer I combined a user-needs approach with a qualitative responsive approach. The user-needs approach provided opportunities to draw on information from participants as they were meaningfully involved in the processes of team building and planning for school change. The responsive approach gave the Academy coordinators a means of understanding the offered program from the multiple perspectives and contexts of the participants. Both methods allowed feedback about on-going concerns and issues both during the summer session and later at each school site.

Qualitative data were collected in several ways. Baseline data were collected at the beginning of the summer session through two surveys. One provided demographics and biographic data about the participants. The second surveyed the participants' beginning attitudes and preliminary understandings of the extent and characteristics of children at risk within each school community. The attitude survey was also administered as a post test at the end of the four weeks.

Additionally, data were collected during formal and informal observations of individual and group work, through records of concerns, questions, and through impressionistic analysis of journal entries. During the summer session participants completed questionnaires and rating scales which reflected their thoughts about program presentations and activities. Both scheduled and open ended interviews were also used to clarify the nature of the program from the participants' perspectives with questions addressing the interaction between content and process. The collaboration of the participants in daily meetings, debriefings, and informal interactions with curriculum presenters and the Academy coordinators provided interactional data about the elements of the basic curriculum process and its outcome. Most Academy sessions were video-taped. In the middle of the fall semester an in-depth questionnaire was administered. Observational data were collected during follow-up visits and exit interviews were conducted with each team at the

end of the semester. Records were also kept of all meetings and conversations with team members.

As I present and interpret the information available to me I have worked to remain as true as possible to the voices of the participants. The richness of the Academy experience evolved as we responded to team members' concerns and needs, as our joint efforts exceeded the expectations of some and fell far short of what others searched for. The themes which were reiterated in the data are those which I have presented in this description. No matter how it might be reported or evaluated the effectiveness or limitations of the New Mexico Academy for School Leaders resides in the lived experience of its participants. For that reason I have tried to use the participants' own words as often as possible. I am hopeful that in so doing I represent their perspectives on the experience.

School Plans and Implementation

As a final product of the 1990 NMASL each team designed an action plan appropriate to the school site for restructuring their school to benefit at risk children. In preparation for the action plan the teams wrote two scenarios. The first described a collective vision of the school in three to five years. A second scenario specified the changes the team planned to have in place at mid-year. Each team then devised a step by step plan which would help them meet these goals including a time-table for the first semester's restructuring work.

The plans which school teams devised during the last week of the Academy represent the diversity among school teams and communities as well as differences in their movement toward fundamental change. Some teams, already involved in restructuring efforts, worked on revising their direction. Others, new to the concept, needed to find an appropriate starting place. Independent of this fact all participants were concerned about how to involve the school staff when they returned to their sites. Because of their Academy experiences team members were particularly sensitive to the power of active involvement in developing new understandings and visions for their school. This awareness led each team to the realization that they needed to share information and involve their staffs in activities in a way which would lead individuals to their own discoveries. Teams felt the need to soft pedal their plans or at the very least to present them only as ideas which needed additional input from school personnel. No one was ready to return with a blueprint in hand and try to move ahead.

Teams also had unique individual concerns depending on their membership, working styles, and personal relationships. One team, present without an administrator and from a restructuring school, realized that they would need the approval of the school decision making committee for any school plan. Rather than developing a plan to be submitted to the decision making body, their plan reflected already approved school goals and outlined objectives for individual team members which would not need approval. A second team and their assistant principal worried about whether the principal would "buy into" their plans and "whether this was an exercise in futility." Members of a third team disagreed on the direction their plan should take and members worked as individuals or small groups on areas of interest. Another team, citing their school's "newness" to ideas about restructuring, narrowed their main focus "to one do-able objective" -- increase parent involvement.

The content of the action plans reflects both variety in complexity and in the range of tasks which the individual teams hoped could actually be achieved by December 31, 1990, their target date. Follow up visits showed most teams were accurate and appropriate in their planning. For the most part teams had taken into account the tenor and receptivity of their school communities and had judged the pace and quantity of work which they could accomplish.

Bayard Elementary School

Scenario 1995

In developing a vision for their school, five years in the future, the Bayard Elementary team took a page from Robert Kennedy and asked themselves to "look at things as they should be and ask 'why not?'" They envision a year-round, bilingual school managed by the shared decisions of staff, parents, and students. The principal acts as a facilitator and instructional leader. The parents have an active role in all facets of school life helping to establish both outreach and inreach programs between the community, social service agencies and the school.

1990 Plan

By the end of the first semester of the change process this team plans: to develop a well defined mission statement and goals for a five year restructuring plan; to begin training the staff in shared decision making and team management techniques during several in-service days; to have a

governance team in place and active; and to present the plans to the superintendent, the school board and the parents. The changes are to be implemented by the team members each of whom chose to facilitate a steering committee which will study the following topics: needs assessment, parent involvement, instructional issues, multicultural awareness, management structure, and community involvement. All staff members will be asked to work with one committee in an area of choice.

Implementation

The Bayard team found in Dr. James Comer's work, a process which they feel is suitable to the needs of their school community. They began to implement their plan as soon as they returned to school. During their first orientation days the team introduced the staff to several Academy activities which held personal significance in terms of their own understandings of at risk indicators and multicultural awareness. The team has planned and held a series of staff and parent retreats and workshops, addressing group process, development of a mission statement, conflict management, and various instructional strategies. These activities have helped move the staff toward the shared understandings which the team held as a result of the Academy experience. Additional workshops are planned for the spring semester.

As a direct result of the Academy, the school now has a mission statement in place and has reached out to the community, other district schools, and social service agencies as they work to develop intergroup support for their students and families. Plans have been formalized for one team member to serve as a community liaison for a portion of each day. The liaison will be working at school and in the homes of families of fifteen kindergarteners, identified as at-risk. The team has made presentations to their superintendent and school board. They also presented the Comer process to a state-wide joint conference of the State Board of Education and the New Mexico School Boards Association. The Parent Advisory Committee is thriving and well organized. Members are working to change their direction and reputation and to involve many more parents than in previous years.

Task forces (the renamed steering committees from the team's plan) are just beginning to function. The foci of the task forces were conceived by the parents and teachers and have changed somewhat from the original plan. The team feels the current foci reflect the Academy's themes and objectives as well as school priorities. Task forces have been formed to address the

following: community, cultural heritage, innovative school curriculum, alternative assessment, management, and positive school climate (including mental health and interagency support). Each team member serves as chairperson or co-chair and all staff members join a task force on which they wish to work.

The teams plan to develop a governance team has not yet occurred. Prior to the Academy this school had a Building Committee which worked in a advisory capacity to the principal. The committee was open to any staff member, but had a regular membership group. The Building Committee does not meet regularly anymore, although it also has not been dissolved. The team and other faculty members report they have moved to a more cooperative management structure in the faculty meeting format. Each Monday, one hour is set aside for a meeting. Compared to last year the staff report "there is less principal telling and much more discussion; the tone of these meetings is one of participation." Decisions are made by a vote of the entire staff. Although time consuming and although not everyone always agrees with the vote outcomes, this structure appears to be acceptable to all for the moment. The team agrees this is an area they would like either to rework or formalize.

Emerson

Scenario 1995

In five years the Emerson team would like to see a new physical facility for their school, well equipped and designed for flexible use. They envision the staff working on a flexible schedule with increased salaries. They would like to see the school providing day care for school families and a medical center for the community. They would also like to staff the school with a full time nurse, social worker, and community liaison. They wish to departmentalize the school, providing multi-age groupings for students with curricular emphasis on humanities and community service.

1990 Plan

The short term plan developed by this team reflects the fact that this school is also a Professional Development School well into the restructuring process. The team sees their plan as one way to improve and extend the site based management model they are working with and to integrate other issues concerning the faculty. They plan to streamline their existing committee structure, developing eight committees. The committees, each charged with a basic element of school/community concern, will allow parents, staff, and

community equal opportunity for involvement. A NMASL team member or PDS coordinator will chair each committee. The committee will report weekly to the Professional Development School Improvement Team (PDSIT), the open membership, decision making body in this school. Through increased staff involvement, the team sees these committees as a move toward facilitating extensive networking within the community, developing interagency support and collaboration, and finding additional resources for the school.

The team plans to introduce this new scheme to the principal and staff for comments, concerns, and adjustments. The Rockefeller team will act as resources and provide group process training to all committees. They also plan to meet bi-weekly to monitor the progress of the committees. The committees with areas of study are: Curriculum, studying integration of curriculum and alternative assessment; Mental Health, proposing support services for teachers; Community, working to increase community contacts; Staff Development, planning for site research classes and inservice planning; Parental Involvement, focusing on parent volunteer training, more active PTA, and a parent liaison; Discipline, continuing work on the existing discipline plan; Restructuring; planning for physical facilities, writing grant applications to support organizational restructuring; Social, planning multicultural studies and festivals.

Implementation

Before school began the team met with the school's principal and the Professional Development School coordinators in information sessions to present ideas from the action plan and to be briefed on new information from the district. As a result of these meetings the Academy leadership team merged with the PDS coordinators and the two building administrators to form the ten member Emerson Leadership Team (ELT), which meets weekly. The formation of this new team was ratified by the PDSIT. A faculty committee wrote job descriptions for all ELT members and the committee structure outlined in the action plan was approved. All faculty and staff are expected to join the committee of their choice.

The Academy team presented a brief NMASL overview during orientation day and an introduction to group process training was presented at the first meeting of the committees by each chairperson. Shared decision making and group processes continue to be used at all PDSIT meetings, committee meetings, and weekly faculty meetings. The Academy team also

planned and presented a half day inservice for the staff providing information about at risk children. The expansion of the Academy team into a school leadership team has meant increased dissemination of information about the NMASL. The ELT notices an increase in requests for professional information among staff, and common understandings are being built through informal discussions and more formal study groups. There is also an increase in involvement, particularly on the part of educational assistants and parents. The team feels the committee structure provides both of these groups with a forum for sharing their interests and strengths. Each committee reports to PDSIT weekly, updating progress, asking for input or seeking approval.

Other objectives from the action plan which have been implemented include: an on-site class in the fall which focused on the teacher as classroom researcher; arrangements for placing a social work practicuum student at Emerson next fall; increased PTA membership and parent involvement; changes in instructional strategies in the classrooms of the Academy teachers which directly affect children and have encouraged other teachers to ask for information and try new techniques.

Legion Park/Los Niños

Scenario 1995

In 1995, the Legion Park/Los Niños team sees their school an an integrated part of the community with teachers and parents being the basic decision makers. They envision community institutions and agencies working collaboratively to insure children an active and responsible role in the process of their own learning.

1990 Plan

The principal focus of the team is to increase parental involvement in all facets of school life and the plan calls for the establishment of a parent room within the school. By December of 1990 this team planned to engage the staff and parents in completing a mission statement. The plan calls for the staff to be involved in group decision making and all staff meetings are to be limited to one topic. Minutes will be taken. Weekly announcements will be sent via memos. Students are to be included in decisions about their own education which will be relevant to their daily lives and ancillary services are to be included in the classroom. Relationships among parents, staff, administrators, and students are to be based on mutual respect and trust and

children are expected to be courteous.

Implementation

This team was able to implement everything they had outlined in their action plan. Because of the complexities of moving into a new school building, the schedule called for in the action plan could not be met during August and September, but a self review of the plan in October showed them to be on target. In September this team reported feeling overwhelmed with the scope of their work, mostly because their faculty was completely new to restructuring concepts, but as the semester ends they report that the work is now being shared across the staff.

The principal presented the entire staff with a brief overview of Academy activities during the initial inservice days. In October, the Rockefeller team planned a full day retreat for the entire staff. The district superintendent and assistant superintendent attended and participated. The team, assisted by presenters from the summer, introduced concepts of group participation, helped the staff define indicators of at risk families, and facilitated a brainstorming session for increasing parent involvement. Later in the fall at an evening meeting and pizza party, some parents and the staff began work on the school's mission statement. A committee of six people, none from the NMASL team, continued the effort. Some of the weekly staff meetings are now devoted to staff workshops. Currently the staff is studying cooperative and group learning. Workshops on these topics are scheduled to continue into the spring.

This team decided not to meet on a regular basis because of their concern about being perceived as an elite group. They also were very low key about their summer experiences, unless asked, preferring to use the skills they developed during the Academy to facilitate meetings or to resolve a problem.

The entire faculty has become the school decision making group. The idea of single agenda item staff meetings, identified in their action plan, is harder to institute. At first meetings were long and discussion sometimes tedious, but as the semester progressed participants reported their meetings ran more smoothly. Task forces are now formed when issues are complex. The team briefly considered moving to a small decision making group, but decided with the fairly small faculty body they would prefer everyone remain involved.

Parent contact was initiated early in the fall with two combined grade-level picnics. Attendance was good, as it was for the parent meetings which followed. Parents have joined task forces to explore playground design and equipment, alternative assessment, and to implement a school volunteer

program. Teachers surveyed all families and are now compiling the data. The plans for a parent room in the building were foiled by a higher than projected enrollment, but the staff is developing an alternative plan. At the start of the year parent participation had increased in all the teams' classrooms and by December the increase was evident throughout the school.

During the fall the Rockefeller teachers approached the business community and social service agencies for support and collaboration and won it in both places. Local businesses are supporting classroom projects and a counseling agency has teamed up with the school to work with families in need.

The staff is beginning work on thematic curriculum units, working to make school more relevant to students' lives through integration. When a local National Guard unit was mobilized and sent to Saudi Arabia many children in the school were affected. In fact involvement of people from this small town represented nearly four times the national average. The incident became the focus of the third and fourth grade curriculum, integrating math, social studies, geography, language arts, and included agendas from the school counseling program. With the help of local businesses, the newspaper and the post office, the children planned, packed, and mailed care packages and letters to family and community members overseas.

Trust and respect has developed between this school staff and administration. The team reports they feel "relaxed" this year, they have the support of the administration to experiment and they are free to be flexible in planning curriculum and classroom instruction as a part of school restructuring. They also report they feel they have developed the trust necessary to speak openly to the administration.

Tombaugh

Scenario 1995

The Tombaugh team dreams of a high-tech school which is used throughout during the day and into the evening to serve the ever changing needs of children and their families. Parents and children and staff are involved in the planning, decision making, and implementation necessary for participatory educational programs which are built on the strengths of a diverse community. Local businesses and social service agencies join in a community effort aimed at appropriate, life-long schooling.

1990 Plan

The goal of the Tombaugh plan for the first months of school is to lay a foundation for restructuring their school. As a first step they chose to work on team building, using a group process approach. They plan to accomplish ten objectives by December. The objectives are: a parent room established; a governance team in place; task forces working on the results of the needs assessment; parent involvement; a social worker on staff; a parent-teacher organization established; a mission statement completed; a discipline policy developed; a resource team working (the Academy team); and a positive school climate.

Implementation

School began for the Tombaugh staff shortly after the Academy ended. The Academy team wanted to acquaint the full staff with the ideas and plans they had developed during the summer session. In August, they planned and implemented a very successful full day staff retreat which was attended by the entire staff and many parents. This initial introduction set the tone for the semester. In addition the team also helped get the new building ready for students. The problems and challenges of the new building (septic system problems, overcrowding, transportation snafus, and furniture shortages), as well as a completely new staff added to the complexity of opening school. The first month was a long one, spent interviewing and hiring four new teachers, dividing classes, setting up new classrooms, planning a building dedication, and proceeding with team plans. Through all of this, and in addition to regular teaching duties, the team has accomplished everything they planned during the first semester. As the semester progressed this team continued to present restructuring information to their school community on a regular basis and in a variety of mediums; video tapes, journal articles, mini-workshops, lectures. The information was presented at staff meetings, twice weekly information sessions (attendance was voluntary), grade level meetings, design team meetings and at the Tombaugh Action Board (TAB), the decision making body, which is made up of parents, faculty, and resource team.

From a vantage point of two months the principal remembers,

> "the team was indispensable to me. I couldn't have done it without them. We were trying to build a school philosophy among all this other confusion and at least I knew I had four

partners, the resource team, who knew where we were going. While I put out fires they chipped away at the big issues. It was wonderful."

Parents are involved in all levels of school life. Many attended the initial retreat which introduced team building activities in addition to looking at children at risk and developing a mission statement. Team building continues in the design teams (task forces), which are comprised of staff and parents with common interests, as they address concerns raised in a needs assessment. The needs assessment surveyed teachers, parents and students at the beginning of school. Both parents and staff comprise the the governance team which began regular meetings in November. The parent-teacher organization also functions in its more usual manner, raising funds and providing volunteers, planning parties, and driving on field trips, but parents are involved in vital classroom roles working with children as well.

Two days a week the school has a social worker who meets with small groups of children and with families. The social worker is an intern from the local university. She also helps teachers with the "Children are People" program designed to build childrens' self esteem.

The school has a variety of alternative programs which provide support for children and new instructional strategies are being piloted in many classrooms. Many are the direct result of the Academy. Among them are cross-age grouping in peer teaching, cooperative learning, and writer's workshop. Alternative assessment procedures are beginning to be put into place in some classrooms. Special services are being delivered in many classrooms and the staff is more open to the integration of regular and special education classes. A discipline plan has been developed by a group of the staff and while not everyone is pleased with it, everyone agreed to give it a try.

In spite of the confusion of opening a new school, implementing a variety of new programs, and trying to get to know each other, this staff has implemented the objectives outlined in their action plan. But the team still feels a need to "work on the school climate". They feel the staff has been working so hard they haven't really had the chance to get to know each other well enough. "We were thrown together and we all pulled to get this show on the road. Sometimes we feel a tenseness. Now we'd like some time to talk and visit and find out who we are here at Tombaugh."

Ann Parish

Scenario 1995

The team from Ann Parish envisions their school in five years as a "family service center", a "home away from home" for students, staff, parents and the community. They describe a well kept, well equipped school which meets childrens' needs through developmentally appropriate individualized curriculum. The school is the hub of the community involved in on-going education for all citizens, a center for social service agencies and services.

1990 Plan

By December of 1990 the team's plan calls for a School Improvement Partnership (SIP) to be formed. The SIP will meet regularly and will be made up of representatives from teachers, parents, support staff, assistants, and the administrator. Also included is; a completed vision statement developed to guide the school; group process training for the entire staff and parent members of the SIP; inservice on site-based management and increased parent involvement. These activities are targeted to help increase awareness and positive feelings toward change and to develop an accepting and nurturing environment. The team is expected to model innovative instructional strategies in their classrooms including integration of special education students into regular classrooms. The plan also calls for completion of a parent needs assessment and restructuring of the parent-teacher group, the PTC, which will meet regularly at convenient times to increase parent participation.

Implementation

This team has been characterized by unresolved personal differences between team members both during the Academy and after their return to school. Conflicts of personality, belief, and philosophy made it difficult for this group to get organized to work well as a team. The conflicts have led some team members to feel lacking in group process skills. They also feel discomfort with trying to develop team building activities with the rest of the staff. During orientation the team worked with the staff on two occasions modeling excellent facilitation skills and eliciting discussion on strongly felt issues. This was in marked contrast to the information transmission model which the principal uses, one factor contributing to some of the summer's tension. These brief sessions gave some faculty a glimpse of the participatory process and sparked their interest in having the team share their summer

experiences. Other faculty members seemed to feel uncertain about the process apparently seeing in it a threat to the principal's power and the status quo. Despite several requests from the staff this team never presented anything more than an overview of the Academy's goals and objectives. Teachers on the team did formalize plans to share Academy information with the staff but they were unable to secure a firm date for the presentation from the principal. Lack of information has lead to misconceptions and misunderstandings. Since returning to their site most team members characterize their problem as one of communication, a problem which has divided the faculty and resulted in low staff morale and general distrust on the part of all staff.

In order to alleviate conflict the entire faculty worked with an outside facilitator to resolve their differences. The facilitation efforts were not entirely successful and while staff remain divided by differences in philosophy and understanding, relationships among team members have generally improved. One team member resigned from the team in early October, citing stress-related health problems. In December, a second team member resigned from the district because of on-going conflict with the principal. Because of a personal commitment to restructuring, this teacher joined the staff of another Academy school. All these facts have made work on the plan difficult although the team members have accomplished some of their goals.

Ann Parish now has a School Improvement Partnership in place and parents attend some of the meetings, although meetings are not held regularly. A parent survey was conducted with approximately thirty parents who attended one of the meetings and the information was compiled. A small group of teachers, mostly from the Rockefeller team, are integrating regular and special education children. In keeping with the action plan the principal submitted a grant proposal to the state requesting support for before and after school care, but it was not funded.

Chaparral

Scenario 1995

The five year scenario designed by the team from Chaparral, portrays an elementary school with an international reputation in the areas of multicultural and special education run by a management team of representatives from the staff and community. The school and community is linked through extensive parent involvement and a home-liaison program. The school and social service agencies meet weekly on the Student Staff

Services Team.

1990 Plan

Chaparral currently is a Professional Development School in the third year of a restructuring process. The decision making body for the school is the School Improvement Team (SIT) which is an open body attended by any interested member of the school staff. The SIT approves matters affecting the entire school and any plan developed for the school needs to be submitted to SIT. This influenced the design of the Chaparral action plan. Team members designed a plan with broad objectives which complemented the school's established vision statement. Two additional specific objectives relate to the personal goals of two team members.

The plan calls for the establishment of a "communications council" to integrate the restructuring efforts, the development of school restructuring goals, a school definition of "at-risk children", and on-going team building within the school. Individual team members plan 1) to develop a story-time program for three, four and five year olds which will introduce them to the school environment, and 2) to develop a pilot noon-time peer tutoring program to help improve student attitude and achievement dubbed, "The Lunch Bunch".

Implementation

When school began in the fall the Chaparral team met with representatives of the standing committees of the SIT to explain the ideas which they brought back from the Academy and to plan the orientation day. On that day team members met with small groups of the faculty to present an overview of the Academy. The team and chairpersons from the standing committees met during September to plan a school-wide, day long retreat in early October to present information and materials from the NMASL. In this way the team met several of their plan objectives for on-going team building, developing a school definition of at-risk children and beginning to establish restructuring goals.

The retreat day was rated as enormously successful by staff members. But when the team met to compile the data they had collected at the retreat a heated dispute surfaced between team members. The problem began as a disagreement over the form in which the data would be presented and ended in a bitter argument which uncovered old animosities. Some personal problems had been in evidence during the summer Academy but with staff

help had been kept under control. The dispute has brought the work of this team to a halt. Team members are working with a mediator trying to identify their communication styles and find a way to continue their work, however, (at the end of the calendar year) nothing more has been accomplished. The story hour and peer tutoring scheduled to begin in October have not yet occurred.

In contrast, on an individual level team members are acting on ideas and understandings developed during the Academy. Two at-risk kindergarteners have been identified and are receiving extended day services, a joint effort of two team members. The kindergarten teacher holds one session each month when parents and children attend school together. Parent involvement has increased significantly in two classrooms and one member of the team is involved in planning for a parental involvement program with one of Albuquerque's largest employers, Sandia National Laboratories, "School Links". This is a program in which the employer releases parents of public school children from their job responsibilities, one half day per week, to work in their child's school.

Post-Academy Activities

The New Mexico Academy for School Leaders had a core staff of three people who worked with the participants throughout the summer session. The core staff continued with on-site support visits and observations in the schools during the fall semester. At the request of the teams several presenters from the summer session continued their work with school faculties during the fall semester.

A two day Academy retreat was held for all participants midway through the first semester. Teams used the time to exchange information about their experiences, share their successes, and lament their mistakes. A session on conflict resolution was offered in response to requests from some team members. Teams assessed the progress made on their action plans, revised them where necessary, and made plans for continuing their work. The closeness which developed during the summer was again evident among the group and cross team dialogue clearly provided necessary and powerful support for Academy members as they wrestled with problems or outlined new ideas. One team member states,

"The development of a restructuring group around the state,

> with a shared understanding and direction for our work, is one benefit of the residential Academy. It has set us free of outside experts. We can do things for each other. We rely on one another. We need to keep in touch. It helps us keep working on our plans."

Results of the Academy: What Do We See? What Have We Learned?

One participant commented at the end of the summer session that she now "understood school restructuring is not just about changing programs within a school, rather it is changing the way schools go about their business." Teams from most of the 1990 NMASL schools are taking baby steps in the direction of change. While no school has radically altered the way business is done this year, there is movement toward change in directions which fundamentally alters the traditional rules and roles of school staff. It is hard to remember that ideas and strategies which are commonplace to many university affiliated educators may be relatively new concepts for staff from some school districts.[3] Among the reasons for this are geographic isolation and lack of resources for up-to-date inservice. These coupled with school cultures which often encourage quiet acceptance of the status quo seem to add stability to inertia.

The NMASL experience provided team members, some from rural sites, with new perspectives for thinking about teaching and learning, about children and schooling, about involvement of parents, and about the resources of their communities. Perhaps none of the changes which have been implemented can be classified as exceptional yet many are noteworthy in terms of what has always happened within a given district. Team members and some district personnel speak of an awareness that movement in the direction of fundamental change takes small, slow steps if it is to become a "true part of the working vocabulary of a school community." A district superintendent says,

> "I'm sometimes impatient to see some <u>real</u> change, some change for children, change at a different scale. But also, we all want this to work and to last and make a difference for kids. And we know we can't do it unless we all agree about

[3] Shared decision-making and cooperative group learning were new ideas for some Academy participants.

what we're doing. What that means is getting the whole community to buy it. It can't be done in a day or even a year. In my district we now have some momentum in a couple of schools, but we have to keep it up. I'd like to see a little healthy competition between schools. We just have to remember we all have to push each other to keep moving."

The data show that the NMASL was successful in several areas and on a variety of levels. On an individual level, participants remark about feelings of personal efficacy and empowerment, and of a broadened knowledge base about issues encompassing at risk children and their schooling. On a team level most groups have developed into cadres of learners providing support for each other and resources for their staff members. Through practice, they are learning how best to share information with other staff and how to become more effective facilitators as they work with other adults within their school communities. Data show changes for schools which include varying levels of shared decision-making implemented at most sites, increased parent participation in both quality and kind in most schools, a more "professional" stance in the commitment of faculty and staff to education, and a change in the way team members think about their own and children's learning which provides a fresh approach to instruction. In addition, participants are beginning to report that some changes have been made for some children in their school experiences.

The data also reveal some areas of the NMASL which need revision. School and team selection is an area critical to the success of the project. Most of the teams were formed through a process of attrition, with several teams simply made up of those who were able to work out the logistics of attending a summer academy. The data show that a different process, perhaps providing some type of support for people identified as key team members, might yield teams with broader bases of school support, thus making them more viable change agents. The criteria for school selection may need to be revisited and some questions raised which address school, community, and district readiness, as well as available district commitment and support.

The principal's role in a restructured school and shared decision making are two other curricular areas which need further study. The role of the principal in a restructured school needs to be addressed in a fashion which provides principals, district administrators, and other team members timely information and support as they work together to define mutually acceptable roles appropriate to the workings of each school community. Teams have

also requested additional time to work on perfecting their knowledge of shared decision making, group process, facilitation skills, possible obstacles, and evaluation tools for assessing their own progress and for soliciting feedback from their staff. They also feel the need for more practice time as the Academy proceeds.

The 1990 Rockefeller teams reflected wide variation in exposure to and knowledge about school restructuring and attendant processes such as site based management, shared decision making, group facilitation, peer leadership, and alternative instructional strategies. While Academy staff responded to participants' differential needs and remained flexible in their planning, the staff feels this is an area which needs some revision. Currently under study are: a variety of flexible daily schedules, a more fluid curriculum including more choice among sessions and possible alternative curricular strands, and development of curriculum modules available for use as need or as interest arises.

Personal Empowerment and Broadened Knowledge Bases

One of the most dramatic results of the NMASL is personal empowerment. The strength of convictions and personal confidence which became evident in the last weeks of the Academy session continues to be seen in the schools. During the summer as participants became empowered, the Academy staff and resource people heard clearly when presentations were off the mark, or when the group felt a special need ought to be addressed. Team members also began taking more responsibility in the debriefing sessions, and asked for fine tuning of information. Participants started using their new skills. They monitored group process for other teams, facilitated their own groups, and developed reflective stances on their own work. Through assessment instruments participants speak of gaining self confidence, of developing belief in their ideas, and of developing courage to act on their beliefs because of background knowledge. Follow up visits to the sites support this finding. We see thoughtful team members speaking clearly about the work of change and acting with assurance in their schools and in public presentations.

Once back in the schools personal empowerment had its frustrating moments for some participants and teams. When teams encounter a barrier participants tend to take the problem very seriously and are often ready to take personal responsibility. That anonymous "they" which school staff

sometime blame when change doesn't occur has become a known "us". One participant told her team,

> "If we can't solve this, we're in real trouble. You know why? Because we can't say <u>they</u> wouldn't let us do it. It's <u>us</u> you guys. There isn't anyone else between us and a solution to this!"

Team members attribute their feelings of empowerment to four major sources: personal respect, increased knowledge base, heightened awareness of cultural issues, and skill development. One participant, an educational assistant, states her personal empowerment came from "being treated professionally. I was treated with respect, as a capable person with valuable ideas." Initially, educational assistants reported feeling at a disadvantage as team members. As a direct result of the Academy experience, educational assistants have moved into positions of leadership in their school communities; one is developing a community liaison program, a second, revitalizing a dying PTA and substantially increasing parent involvement, and another, planning to begin work toward a degree in education.

One third grade teacher attributes feeling empowered to "the development of a knowledge base from which I can act, it broadened my conceptual understandings, I can see alternatives, and I have some rationale for my ideas." In addition to having some of their ideas validated this teacher and other participants were exposed to a wide variety of new information which caused them to struggle, reflect, explore, and reformulate some basic beliefs. Some felt they were "given permission to teach in a way we had always believed was right, rather than conforming to models which we felt uneasy with." One person said simply, "I really never thought about cultural influences in the classroom. I'm re-examining the way I teach. I'm on much firmer ground as a result of the summer session."

Most participants report increasing their understandings has substantially changed their outlooks on school and teaching, children and learning. Some had toyed with some of the ideas which were presented, but never felt the support to move on them publicly or to encourage other teachers to join them. They characterize themselves as "closet innovators". One participant notes,

> "I am now having to rethink twenty years of teaching experience and all my educational training. And it's great because it is as if a door is open a crack, I can see what might

> be awaiting me, something I hardly dared hope for. I learned a lot this summer. I'm much more knowledgeable about how children learn, and now I can think about how I want to teach. I'll never go back to the old way. You know, its like having had a taste of freedom, you can't have just a little bit."

An administrative participant responds that the experience of the summer "increased my sensitivity to others, to the strength that lies in diversity. We need to capitalize on that." Several others speak with one voice about the development of their skills.

> "Empowerment comes from having the vision necessary to initiate change and the skills we need to involve the entire staff. Working as a team allows us to trust others with decisions. The pressure is off the team and all staff members are now expected to contribute."

At the end of the summer session positive responses about the impact of the Academy on personal growth and leadership skills were uniformly reported by participants. However, as teams returned to the schools members of one team began to question whether the experience had fully prepared them for work in the schools. This team seemed to run into immediate conflict. Some conflict existed between members but most developed between the body of the team and their administrator. With the staff asking the team for input about restructuring and the principal blocking the scheduling of any information sessions, team members and the administrator ended up in pitched battle over governance issues and shared decision making. This conflict focused attention away from issues benefiting kids at risk and eventually led to a badly divided staff.

In the end of October a teacher and educational assistant from this team questioned their leadership roles and their facilitation skills. They remarked, "the Academy really let us down when it came to preparing us to deal with conflict. Personal empowerment is fine but we aren't effective as leaders if we can't handle our peers." Staff at the school questioned the basis of restructuring because they had not received any explanatory information. The principal reported, "the academy questioned, defied and challenged my authority openly. Now my leadership abilities are seen as dictatorial rather than leading. At this point I can't think of a single positive experience."

Changing Instructional Strategies: Change for Children

During most of the summer session the Academy teachers were quiet about individual classroom practices, appearing to be engaged with more global issues. But journal entries often reflected developing thoughts about classroom practice. Hurried margin notes hinted at thoughts about change and about developing ideas for curriculum materials. Once back in school teachers told of feeling their classrooms were "a refuge from the work of restructuring and a place where we can do it." This is an interesting turn of phrase. One wonders whether new curricular practices were not seen as restructuring. Yet, in discussing how changes in instructional strategies have a direct effect on children, participants always note this as part of their "restructuring efforts". It seems more likely that the leadership roles teachers assumed felt more like "work" because they were so unfamiliar while the work of changing teaching practice, possibly equally unfamiliar, is seen as "doing restructuring" rather than being work, simply because the teaching is familiar.

One school has made a radical change in its approach to the curriculum. The staff is moving from the local equivalent of a national curriculum where every teacher taught the same lesson at the same time every day toward an integrated, thematically organized curriculum which includes cooperative group work for children. This is no mean feat in a small district, bound by habit, where even unremarkable changes are community news. The teachers are delighted with the shift as are the students. Teachers remark on the quality of change in their teaching lives,

> "This is so much easier and it makes so much sense! The old way you had to leave children behind because it was time to move from social studies to math because the clock said so. We were leaving these poor kids in the dust! I don't know how we expected them to learn."

Teachers comment as well as on the quality of the children's work, "I never thought second graders could write like this!" or "Look what this child discovered...," and "Look what she understands about...".

In other schools teams as well as individual participants have initiated other instructional changes. All schools but one have worked to integrate children from special education classes into regular classes. In one school where teachers from a particular grade level were resistant to all integration

efforts, an Academy Special Education teacher side-stepped direct confrontation on the issue, yet realized her goal. The teachers in question needed coverage for their classrooms so they could attend the funeral of a peer from another school. The Academy teacher provided an afternoon of Special Arts for her Profoundly Involved class as well as all the children in the grade level. This act, the Special Education teacher's support for her fellow teachers, has opened the door for more integration activities. Increased interaction between children in all classes has proved beneficial and teachers report the changes are obvious throughout the school.

Teachers on the same team also set up daily peer tutoring across grade levels and in most sites special support services are delivered within heterogeneous classroom groups rather than as pull-out programs. All these changes have provided children with new and positive interactions with diverse classmates. In the words of a third grade teacher,

> "There's a lot more shuckin' and jivin' between the third graders and the kindergarten than there was last year. But the bottom line is this, children in both grades feel important and necessary to the education of other children."

Additionally, two schools are working on portfolio assessment, one with a parent-teacher committee studying the issue. At a third site one teacher has implemented portfolio assessment of her Language Arts curriculum. Parent support in all three schools for alternative assessment in strong. One teacher of an integrated third grade/special education "D" level classroom has introduced group process skills to her students as a part of their cooperative learning groups and as a tool for handling classroom issues. Another teacher reports, "As a result of the Academy, I'm teaching to the children and not to the books and it's working. My non-readers are reading!"

Parent Involvement: Two Vignettes from Teachers

Another result of the Academy is the increase in both the amount and quality of parent participation in most schools. Increased parent participation was a major goal of all the NMASL teams and participation has increased in both quantity and kind. School staffs have worked hard to make certain that in broadening parent involvement they have included parents of at risk

children as well as parents of school thrivers. One school is in partnership with a county literacy program which teaches parents of children at risk how to work with their children. This program focus on families, supports the parents as primary teachers of their own children, while they become more literate members of the community.

In many Academy sites parents are now members of decision making bodies, school study groups, and action boards. They are involved in more than the traditional room parent role, planning parties, selling popcorn and assisting on field trips. In most schools, parents are partners in vital classroom work with children, in making decisions about curriculum, school philosophy and policies, and in setting priorities for parent and community support. One principal states, "This has been a wonderful year. I have really learned that parents and teachers can be trusted to make the right decisions for children. And they are good at it!"

Since the summer session, parents in most schools have been invited to schools for social events, regular meetings, conferences, policy meetings, PTA, as well as special events or regular work in the classrooms. Parent involvement has meant change for some children. One teacher relates an anecdote about a shy, usually silent, monolingual Spanish speaker in an ESL class who ventured to her classmates mid-semester, *"Mi madre es importante. La noche pasada venía a la escuela para una conferencia."* ("My mother is important. She was coming to school for a meeting last night.")

A second story about parent involvement comes from a fifth grade teacher.

> "I understand now that parent involvement means more than communication - it means developing trust between people. I was always good about keeping in touch with parents but I don't think it was really more than talking. I've always been on top of that. But now I understand you need to develop real trust and respect between people if you want to help children. I have gotten to know the mother of one of my students and I trust her to help me.
>
> This is what happened. I had this kid in class who was in trouble at school. I called the family, just as I always do, because I didn't want it to get out of hand. The mother told me she was aware of the problem because it was also happening at home. Her husband worked at night and her son was horrible when his father was gone. She sounded desperate and instead of telling me she'd see to the problem, which is what I usually hear, she begged me for help.

Well, I was desperate for help too, so I invited her to come to school. I have to admit I just wanted her to see how far behind he was, and how awful he acted. I thought maybe then she'd do something. I realize now I was really only thinking of myself. So I invited her to work in the classroom and although she was hesitant at first, because her English isn't fluent, she said she'd do anything. So I asked her to help the children with something she liked, which is math.

Well, it was really amazing! Right away the kids thought is was neat to work with Armando's mom. They were getting some special attention. The children in my class respect her and listen to her. Kids vie to be able to work with her. They see it as a special honor. And you can hear the pride in her voice when she calls kids to work with her. But the neatest thing is that Armando's school work is improving. He's doing so much better and he treats her with respect at home. She's also beginning to ask me about other areas in which she can help me. I feel so lucky and I'm ashamed sometimes that this all came out of my own selfishness. I really appreciate the help she's given me. It has changed the way I teach. It means I have just that much more time for children, and also that children get more quality time from adults."

Shared Decision Making: Change is Hard, Change is Slow.

"You told us it would be hard, and we knew it was complicated, but I never expected this! The word patience now has a whole new meaning."

This refrain was heard over and over. Even though people left the Academy with this idea in mind they are astonished by the slowness and the complexity of the change process. Being informed that progress takes time and experiencing the snail's pace of movement toward restructuring are entirely different experiences.

As a direct result of the summer experience participants realized that fundamental change meant that all parties involved in children's education must also be involved in the decision making process. At most sites teams have implemented shared decision making. One major concern of all the teams was how to include other school staff in the restructuring efforts. This problem was solved in different ways. Two groups merged their leadership team with other school leaders when they returned to their sites. Parents

were also included at one school. In both these sites the decision making body is an open group, which operates on the premise that interested parties will take the responsibility to be involved. Two of the smaller schools decided to include the entire staff in the decision making process. Of the remaining two schools, one had shared decision making in place prior to the Academy, and the second is still working to resolve major personal and philosophical problems. In this school a shared decision making process is nominally in place although it is not functioning well.

The Academy teams find those things which slow down the work of restructuring are interwoven, complex issues which reside in the culture of the school and the assumptions about "how things get done". Historically, decisions were usually made from the principal's office. Several Rockefeller participants remark that they need to remind each other daily,

> "about the issue of making decisions and about a host of other issues - that things don't have to be done this way. We get into school and we all make assumptions about how things are, and you know, it isn't written anywhere that things have to be a certain way!"

Some participants feel a very real need to have more people in each of the schools with knowledge and experiences from the Academy. Yet they may have been the very people who were slow about getting that information to their staff. Participants, although feeling personally empowered, sometimes question their own ability and expertise with their peers. For others scheduling quality time is an issue. Some team members stated they need more lead time between the summer session and returning to school. "We had barely processed all that information for ourselves and we needed to try to get it to others." Others would use the time during the summer to work with school colleagues without the pressure of teaching.

> "If we're to restructure, we need collegial time to work on these ideas and develop a consistent philosophy. And the way we're now set up that doesn't happen during the school year. Once we get people turned on to these ideas they might join us in trying to restructure to make that time. It has become the chicken and the egg question. Unless they're excited about this information we can't expect them to lobby for built in collegial time."

In some schools the flow of information has been informal, over lunch, through over-heard conversations which spark questions, at happy hours talking about the summer's experiences, or seeing something interesting and different in an Academy teacher's classroom.

> "It has been powerfully low- keyed. People are talking to each other, examining substantive issues, exploring alternatives, studying together. There seems to be a new expectation and commitment to professional work in our school."

A second part of this complex issue is simply the time consuming nature of teaching and schools and the energy needed for working with children in classrooms. When teams reported feeling most stressed (at the beginning of the school year) some participants felt little time and energy was left for working toward fundamental change, while others reported feeling so focused on the issue of change they worried they were neglecting their teaching duties. Teachers on the teams speak of working extra long days and note that this raises the question of a fundamental restructuring of the way in which teachers are expected to work.

> "In our weariness sometimes this does seem an insurmountable problem of economics, politics, and the social value placed on education and the profession of teaching."

Another part of the issue is the relative slowness of the shared decision making process when many parties are involved equally -- the irony of more people getting less done.

> "Our meetings went on forever and we never could make a decision. We finally decided to form task forces. Now the task force researches the problem, synthesizes the information and presents alternatives to the group. It has helped a lot."

Still another piece is the time it takes teachers (who have traditionally been without decision making power except at the classroom level) to learn a process, to trust their abilities and instincts, and to develop a knowledge base which allows them to make informed decisions for the entire school.

> "Teachers would watch us in meetings and they'd say, 'What

> are you guys doing? You just say whatever you think. You ask all kinds of questions.' Now they've seen that we can say anything, that the principal is really one of us, that she doesn't have all the answers either, and they're feeling more comfortable with the process (brainstorming) and joining in."

School personnel also need to overcome the distrust they often feel for the district administration. Developing an understanding of the workings of a system seems to help.

> "Exposure to local and state administrators really helped us understand why things are done as they are. Many of these people would like to change a thing or two. They seemed really interested in hearing our points of view. It makes us hopeful that we can be part of the change."

Some participants who had a chance to work with their administrators during and since the summer academy, have developed a different outlook, seeing their administrators as approachable people, as part of a team.

> "I'm afraid people will think I'm rude when I forget and call him by his first name in public. But I'm so used to him being a regular person, someone who works on the team with us. I can talk to him about what we're trying here, and he talks about what he's trying in the district."

Are All School Districts Ready for Change?

The school districts sending teams to the Academy committed themselves, through their superintendents, to supporting the efforts of the teams during the 1990-91 school year. In all cases the support has been forthcoming -- ranging from quiet grants of financial assistance for additional staff inservice to active participation by top administrators in the change efforts of the school.

One Academy school has concerted public support from the top administrators in the district who are encouraging all schools in their district to look toward fundamental change. The superintendent is involved in the change work along with the team, attending school workshops and retreats, talking with teachers, and working on the task forces with parents and staff. One team member reports "the goals and objective of the NMASL are of

importance in our district. We have a common vocabulary and that supports our efforts."

In this district, when a "mandate" slipped out of the district office, the Academy team "called a meeting with the superintendent to remind him that although they did not disagree with the decision they felt 'mandates' are not part of the workings of a restructured district." The superintendent agreed. This serious exchange, handled with an air of amusement characteristic of this team's rapport with their superintendent ("we don't use the M word in this district"), emphasizes their deep commitment to restructuring. All the parties understand the risks and pitfalls which are integral to change efforts, communication is open, mistakes are expected, growth is assumed.

In another district the superintendent indicated support and then retired leaving the promise in the lap of the incoming administrator who knew nothing of the Academy's efforts. The school team in this district feels gnawing concern with their lack of knowledge about the administration's position. They have received the support they requested in the area of staff inservice but they have no sense of the superintendent's position about school restructuring. While this team feels supported by their school board the absence of the superintendent's commitment creates an air of uncertainty. But as they continue to plan and work toward a restructured school they wonder aloud about if and when they might be stopped.

The rhetoric of a third school district supported participatory management. All schools were asked to develop a forum at the school level to address site based decision making and school improvement processes. The superintendent created a council of teacher advisors to meet once a month to make curricular and instructional recommendations to him and to the school board. Yet, teachers in this school found that some administrators were apparently not as committed to restructuring as their rhetoric indicated. When the team ran into problems with the principal over shared decision making, one administrator made it clear to the team that he expected and supported a top-down chain of command. These contradictory messages have contributed to the team's inability to implement their plan. The ground rules in this district are not clear, channels of communication seem garbled and a general lack of trust pervades the school.

The other three school teams' experiences have been generally positive. In all cases requests for support have been honored and district administration is supportive of the changes in progress. Even so, there are still frustrations and NMASL participants have noticed that "change seems to

be slow at the district level as well." Team members in one district firmly committed to a variety of restructuring efforts express some disappointment because they believe they have some expertise in the restructuring process which might be beneficial to other schools throughout the district. These teams feels their experiences are not recognized nor are they invited to share their progress. In another district, where the administration is in the process of restructuring, the Academy team would like to develop a restructuring dialogue within their district. Yet the team has had difficulty making contact with their top administrators.

The experiences of the NMASL teams during the first three months of their restructuring efforts leads to a nagging question. How can the Academy experience be expanded to provide education and support for district personnel as they struggle with restructuring the system at a broader level? Ultimately the goal of the NMASL is to develop leadership cadres which lead the change effort, but if that effort is to succeed, restructuring must take place throughout the district. We wonder whether it would it be helpful to structure the teams so top level district personnel are among the participants as equal members of the teams? It is hard to know whether it is the appropriate place of the Academy to try to move a district which has not yet decided where they really stand. Should lack of clarity about or resistance to restructuring at the district level preclude team selection?

Juggling Teaching and School Leadership

We are most aware of this dilemma as we watch teachers juggle their myriad roles. Most participants found the pace and intensity of the summer session exhausting, but at the same time compelling and exhilarating. Twenty/twenty hindsight produces the same requests for restructuring the Academy that was heard at the end of the summer session; "the intensity is powerful although tiring, four weeks are needed to cover the information, take a break in the middle to allow processing time."

We are also concerned with the pace and intensity which teams seem to feel as they returned to their schools. Initially, everyone appeared overwhelmed by the enormity of the work they had outlined for themselves. But as teams began their work, they appeared more comfortable.

> "The overview is staggering, but we found if we just worked at one thing at a time all the details which bothered us at first just seem to get taken care of."

Some participants reported working twenty hour days at first, over committing themselves, having difficulty declining extra projects. One teacher and her administrator wonder together,

> "How much longer can this go on? How much longer can we expect this from teachers who are already paid too little and expected to do too much? We have a big societal problem here. Is a program like this really fair?"

Yet at this school the major thrust of the teams action plan was to increase the participation of the school community. And they have been successful. The focus of their plan which reorganized the committee structure of the school looked deceptively simple. If fact it had elegant results. A teacher reports,

> "The thing the reorganization did was to provide every staff member equal access to the restructuring process. We have people participating on committees and initiating change and exhibiting strengths that most of us never knew existed. We have people taking part who never were engaged before this."

Academy participants were able in this way to enlist others and to engage them in the work of restructuring. At the end of four months the principal-teacher pair reflect,

> P: "Yes, restructuring is tiring, in fact this business is exhausting! But you know we've increased our participation and we're discovering new strengths on the staff. We have learned how to make decisions based on all the children's welfare, on philosophical grounds, rather than on the principal's pet projects, or an individual's personal interest. And, I think, we're feeling good about what we have accomplished."
>
> T: "I feel so tired and there is just not one free moment during the day at school, and because I'm tired I sometimes end up feeling down as well. But I always can count of my team mates for support and help. It has been worth it. I have really expanded my horizons."

Other teams appear to have had similar initial experiences but as the

semester progressed they found themselves more comfortable with the role and the rest of the staff both more interested and willing to become involved. The two schools which have expanded their teams, have helped lighten the load for the Rockefeller team, and broadened teacher leadership efforts within the schools. This move also has diffused or avoided the perception of an elite group of school leaders, something all the school teams wish to avoid. One team characterizes their work in the schools as "relaxed, we all know we have support from all around and we're all working in this together. Everybody is pitching in."

Several principals concur that they feel there is a lightening of the work load which they normally carry. They can share the thoughts, ideas, burdens, and excitement as well as the work of the restructuring effort. "Things seem so much easier, and I really do trust parents and teachers to make the right decisions for children."

Team Selection and Membership

The selection and make up of teams has surfaced as a matter of primary importance to the success of this project. While four of the six teams appear to be having major success in implementing school change, two continue to be having difficulty. Follow up data shows that the team membership is an important issue. In order for the team to be successful in spearheading the change effort the faculty needs to identify people whom they see as leaders or whom they trust to become their leaders.

The successful teams were selected in a number of different ways. One team was chosen by the principal as "a group representative of the staff", a second was elected by a vote of the entire faculty. The two others were products of self-selection through attrition, as were the two unsuccessful teams. While it is clear that method of selection is not the prime consideration for insuring a successful team, interpersonal relationships among team members seem to be very important.

Both of the teams which are presently having difficulty have less than perfect personal relationships. In one case the team members variously report their problems with the principal stem from: severe communication problems; the principal's inability to work as a team member; lack of commitment on the principal's part to shared decision making and the philosophy of the NMASL; the mixed messages the principal is receiving from the district about the restructuring process; and basic lack of trust by

team members for the principal, who seems to be working from another agenda.

In the other case the team is having relationship problems among themselves. Although these teachers are reported by their administrator to have learned during the summer to be more caring and careful listeners to their peers on the staff they seem not to carry this over to each other. Among their problems are several different communication styles, radically different political orientations, and old animosities. One reports their problems stem from school leadership emerging from "among the non-elitist ranks in the school, and that challenges the status-quo", another reports their problems stem from their own egocentric stances, a third from lack of communication among team members and between the team and the principal.

Role of the Principal

Teams that are working well all appear to have very easy and equitable relationships with their school administrator. Even though these administrators weren't all in attendance this summer, four teams now have an administrator as a working team member. Just as there is no one working style for successful teams there seems to be no single model for the administrative role. One thing all participants agree on however is how important the commitment and support of their administrator is.

During the summer of 1990, with a heavy emphasis on developing group process the attending administrators all became team members, with very little differentiation in roles. Once the school year began some surprise was noted when this role equalization did not continue. The change came as a surprise to the teams and to some administrators as well. While most teams needed to adjust, it seems to have been one factor in throwing at least one team off course, causing conflict and upset. The changes in principal-teacher relationships were minute in most cases; the use of courtesy titles where participants had been on a first name basis, reserve on the part of teachers in speaking their minds when principals were accustomed to direct feedback, principals forgetting to give rationale or to solicit input about a minor decision. While one participant characterizes the change as "unbalancing for a moment, we had become so close and now we all seemed to be compelled by some force to keep a little distance and it felt strange," another reports, "she's like another person, someone who doesn't share our common background and it just doesn't work." An additional factor in the role differentiation

issue is the extreme concern felt by team members, that they not be seen as the principal's "elite group" or "the favored few" by their peers in the schools.

All the Academy principals question their roles in site based management. Questions arise whether or not the principals attended the summer academy and whether or not their teams are working successfully toward change. The curricular evaluations done at the end of October showed virtually no change in the appropriateness of curricular coverage of the role of the principal, compared to participants' responses at the end of the summer academy. However, comments, questions, and reflections from principals as well as other participants has convinced the staff that the role of the principal is an area where the academy staff feels a different curricular effort is in order. Teacher, educational assistants, and principals alike seem to be wrestling with the new role of the administrator. Administrators questions and comments vary:

- "Am I supposed to be the facilitator of this group?"
- "It has been hard to let others make the decisions, but I'm learning not to own everything, and people are much more involved."
- "I just don't know how to approach this group (the NMASL team), what my role might be, because they don't seem to be sending out any consistent signals."
- "The team has relieved me of so much, allowed me to interact with my staff in a number of different ways, see school events from a different perspective, been a real support for me. I guess we all support each other, and that has been powerful. We can accomplish so much more."

Participants other than administrators are all very much aware of the necessity of their administrator's support and commitment. They note that increased interaction with the principal has broadened their perspectives about the school, and educated them about the workings of the district. In some cases the principal has been freed up to be an instructional leader, providing much appreciated resources for the staff.

There seems to be little available either in the folklore of principalships, in the literature, or in course offerings in departments of educational administration which helps principals and prospective principals develop the conceptual frameworks necessary to understanding and defining the possibilities for alternative roles in restructured schools. In some localities principals have developed support groups as part of their ongoing

professional development, which provide much needed and welcome support. Perhaps one outcome of the NMASL should be just such a group of school personnel who are currently involved in restructuring experiences and who can provide support in role definition to those new to the endeavor.

In planning a curricular strand which addresses the issue of role definition, a case study method might be appropriate, exploring conceptual frames, focusing attention on those things which seem to work, providing support and how to's for principals who are just beginning, getting the input of teachers and district administrators, supplying time for principals to define a role for themselves which feels comfortable and is also workable within the parameters of their school community and their districts.

The Bottom Line: Is there a Difference for Kids at Risk?

When Academy participants are asked whether children are having a different experience in school as a result of their restructuring efforts, they answer that it is too soon to tell. But the answer is always qualified as they add, "there are changes in classroom practice which have a direct effect on children, and changes in teachers' perceptions and understandings, and changes in teachers themselves." Yet the consensus among teams seems to be, "We can't really say we have made substantive change for at risk children. But we have made a start."

One team notes "some things seem to be gradually working down". The team and faculty members remark they have become "more sensitive and more aware of children's needs as a result of the NMASL." Within a semester this school designed and implemented a program called, *Manos a Manos,* serving at risk kindergarteners and their families. The school also has a number of programs underway which collaborate with community agencies and other district schools. Still this faculty is not satisfied they have made a difference for kids.

At a second site where restructuring has involved many more parents and radically changed the working atmosphere for school faculty from unquestioning support of a very hierarchical model to one of active involvement in school decisions, teachers report the community is more involved with the children's schooling. They see this as the result of their own realization that they can (and need to) ask for educational support for all children. It is interesting that these teachers note, almost off-handedly, that children are becoming more involved in community service.

Children in several schools are learning group process roles, and are

working in cooperative groups in selected classrooms, and on student council. At other sites children in full inclusion and integrated classrooms are using team process skills in daily group work as well as to solve school problems. Team members in both places feel teachers have become more caring and involved, through collegiality and enhanced understandings of children's needs. They state the effect of the NMASL experience is "diffusing down" to kids, but feel they have not yet made large enough changes, more time is needed for that to happen.

These responses are typical as teams question whether their work has brought about change for kids. It is a response which raises questions. Is the vision these teachers hold so grand they may never feel it is accomplished? Or are these teachers too humble about their small successes? In some cases it is hard for team members and other faculty to enumerate the changes which have taken place for children. When change takes place, unless a concerted effort is made to document it, teachers tend to see it as "just part of what we do".

While it is still too early in the process to tell whether the project will make a substantial difference for at risk kids, it is important to recognize there have been some changes for children. In many classrooms children are having a somewhat different experience because the people around them now hold a different view of school. In several schools principals, parents, and the community are working for children with renewed involvement. To date there are no radical program changes or grand schemes for totally revamping school structures. Inroads have been made, but sweeping changes will take more time and concerted work.

In the meantime it is valuable to remember the individuals; Mariceli knows her mother is important, the children in the Profoundly Involved D Level classroom have new friends at school, Armando has developed a measure of respect for his mother and pride in his school work. These are the stories which stand out. There are many others which have not yet been told.

Conclusion

The choreography of change has moved NMASL participants along multiple paths, yet not all paths share the same direction. Restructuring, welcomed by many and accepted in some schools, has been a source of threat and division for others. The Academy experience has been successful and productive for a majority of the participants, yet in a given week, any team

might not be functioning well. New and unfamiliar roles take time and practice to perfect. New school facilities have a way of subverting energies. In addition to restructuring work, participants still need to find time to teach and to assist and to administer and to parent.

Restructuring efforts have taken small slow steps toward a vision of schools as better, more equitable places for children. The participants' vision also includes school as a more equitable place for themselves. As participants see themselves as capable members of their school community and feel their contributions validated, they assume more responsibility for and interest in change at their sites. In this way the Academy experience has been personally powerful for the majority of teams and team members.

A sense of self efficacy leads many Academy members to articulate their work within their schools to other groups throughout the state. The NMASL is considered a viable alternative among restructuring efforts around New Mexico. It is through thoughtful presentations and well considered proposals to state and community agencies that the Rockefeller Academy became known. When participants made presentations at the joint conference of the State Board of Education and the New Mexico State School Boards, they gained a reputation for personal openness and flexibility, and developed credibility for their work in planning and implementing school change. People from around the state interested in moving toward change were delighted to talk to people who had really done it and were honest about their failures as well as their successes.

The intensity of the residential format led participants to develop cohort groups, and share across groups to expand their knowledge and elaborate their ideas. Because of the close work within a fairly small group of people, few topics escaped discussion. Participants note increased sensitivity to and valuing of diverse opinions and experiences. The summer session also helped the team members develop new perspectives on children and learning, and to begin to understand and address the social and cultural factors which influence children's school experiences.

Participants' understandings influence their own classroom work, their reflections on their own teaching, and their relationships with others in the school community. For some this has meant the painful realization that they personally are not ready for this type of change, or are not able to work within a given group. For others it meant understanding their school and district were not really prepared for change. In the latter cases participants are now looking for or have found more comfortable teaching situations.

As a result of one semester of work most teams have become more patient and more realistic as they move toward school change. While they continue to reach for the vision captured in their action plans, they realize that change takes time, that it is effected in a safe and accepting environment, that everyone must take risks, and that no decision is immutable.

While both participants and staff of the NMASL believe it is much too soon to tell about long-term change for children, individual bright spots act as beacons of what might be. Teams are aware that substantive change takes the time and involvement of many players. Members are also aware of the enormous effort necessary to secure and sustain the vision they hold for their communities' children. But they are willing to continue working toward their goal, whether it means enlisting one person at a time, or winning over a committee of several, or securing the help of a local agency.

The core staff of the NMASL entered the summer Academy with a "hands off" approach, as did most of the outside presenters. Rather than adopting a "teaching is telling" model, the thrust of the NMASL was to provide information which would support the school teams in identifying and defining goals which were important and relevant to their situations. No magic formulas were dispensed which would smooth the road to restructuring, or make choices simple and clear cut, or define rules and roles for team and school participation.

The working assumption was that these participants were thoughtful members of school faculties, who were in touch with their own educational philosophies and had a good handle on the needs of their schools. The job of the Academy was to help them learn how to move toward a collective goal, restructuring their schools with at risk children as the main focus. For the most part it was a well grounded assumption. The hands off model worked for the majority of the teams. But the BOEPAD staff is concerned about teams that run into problems. Could a more directive approach help alleviate the extent of the conflict? Is this the right model for all teams? These questions need to be addressed as we approach the next pilot.

Another assumption made by the core staff, that elementary teachers were well equipped to become teachers of teachers and leaders of school faculties, may not have been as well founded. Many of the teachers felt themselves poorly equipped to step into school leadership roles, regardless of how adept they were in their work with children. Remarks about working in teams, and with adults contain comments about "the difficulty, the scariness, the energy and the exhaustion," involved in this new role. Lacking many experiences working directly with adults, unsure of peer acceptance of this new role, and

stepping into untested waters in their school sites caused most team members considerable concern. The concerns, all well founded, center around finding time, engaging staff, sharing massive amounts of information, using newly developed skills. Can the NMASL address these concerns more succinctly or provide experiences which help eliminate them? Does this mean an additional strand in our curriculum? Might this be better handled in the follow-up portion of the project? These questions also need attention.

The 1990 NMASL pilot project has met some of its goals. At this writing, four schools have leadership teams in place, team members have a changed understanding of schooling and how to benefit children at risk, teams are working to restructure schools. The impact on a small group of school personnel has been tremendous. Because of these people some children are having a different experience this year. The teams do see themselves as part of a leadership effort in their schools, yet the effects seem still to be felt and acted on in a very personal way, and that factor affects the breadth of fundamental restructuring. Teams need more time to work together, to expand and include the community, to begin to realize the true benefits of collaborative efforts. It may take a long time to undo what most school people have learned so well; teaching is a lonely profession.

At the end of the summer session participants commissioned a NMASL theme song, which emphasized this position. The song was written by Kate Keeley of the Bayard team and inspired by a remark made by Ed Joyner, during the first week of the Academy. In a group discussion about plans for school restructuring, assuming school leadership roles, about meeting the needs of all children, of insuring equitable schooling for children at risk, one participant spoke for the group,

> "These four weeks have made us really question what we are and should be doing. Sometimes we don't feel certain about anything. But the one thing we <u>do</u> know is described in our song. Its the only thing we can each be sure of. Our own commitment. That's why the song says, '*Let there be change in schools, and let it begin with me*'."

We Have Dreamed A Good Dream

A Supplementary Report : New Mexico Academy for School Leaders
Spring 1991

Mary Nordhaus
Bureau of Educational Planning and Development
University of New Mexico
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Introduction

The folkways of teaching hold the time between New Years and spring break as a time when teachers see rapid growth. In elementary schools children use newly learned skills to seek out information, middle schools kids now know their way around the schedule, and high school teachers report their students are elaborating on ideas and concepts. The spring semester has not been so very different for the schools from the New Mexico Academy for School Leaders who are working to restructure to benefit children at risk.

In most schools the semester brought varying measures of growth, progress, and successful expansion to restructuring efforts. Faculty and staff involvement has grown and work continues on a variety of new endeavors. Participants learned to handle barriers to their efforts with humor and patience, and people in the schools are forging ahead with a number of new and broad initiatives. In one school, spring semester saw the virtual dissolution of the NMASL team, although the participants continued working individually toward the goals set in their summer plan. In another school, the second semester has been a continuation of the frustrations of the fall, where efforts to develop positive feelings and an awareness of the change process, met with barriers.

Why the flurry of activity and success in most schools? NMASL participants tell us that they feel they have internalized the information they were exposed to during the summer Academy and it has been consolidated through use. "We have dreamed a good dream"[4] and the dream is slowly becoming part of their collective realities. Throughout the year, as they are teaching, they also plan, and facilitate, and share information from the summer. They model alternatives, involve parents and community, and develop visions for the future. In acting, they find they will never be quite the same; never look at education and school systems and children and families in the same way. "You have to be willing to evaluate all aspects of the educational experience, to have an open mind."

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[4] All quotations in this report are the words of the NMASL participants. They are taken verbatim from personal interviews, from conversations and from final evaluation documents.

One group reports that while

> "we still (may be) kindergarteners in terms of restructuring, (what we have) achieved so successfully is personal and professional commitment."

Although sometimes they feel exhausted by that commitment -- their heightened awareness and different attitudes toward schooling -- they also have a sense of comfort which allows them to act and involve others at their sites. Attitudes have changed throughout schools, "the ideas have snow-balled", as faculty members ask for new strategies and information, and then put it to use in their classrooms. While the groups which suffered personal conflicts may not be working as teams now, the participants continue their work as committed individuals and have joined efforts with others in their schools. In some cases team-work is gone, in others it has gone underground, but in both cases the spirit and shared vision of the Academy experience remains whole.

In mid-April the NMASL teams gathered in Albuquerque for a two day conference, to share their successes and "their bumpy roads", to report on progress this year and to solidify their visions for the year to come. This update is a report on the results of that meeting, and the impressive work of both individuals and of teams which has occurred in the schools in the spring of 1991.

Ann Parish

The school year got off to a slow start for the team from Ann Parish. While some restructuring ideas and plans were implemented in the classrooms of team members and a few other teachers, general tension and disagreements among the staff stifled progress in the school as a whole. While conflict between the team and the administrator tended to isolate the NMASL team members from the staff, it also pulled the participants together and eventually led them to resolve the personal differences which were evident during the summer session. Through patience and continued work the team's increasing appreciation for and trust in each other saw them through the difficulties of the first months -- "We developed a collective sense of humor," one reports, "and perhaps that is what kept us going." Although NMASL team-work is not a possibility in this school at this time, the participants continue to support restructuring efforts on an informal and individual scale.

At the district superintendent's request, an Academy staff member worked with the staff during a February in-service day, helping them reconceptualize and reorganize their fledgling School Improvement Partnership (SIP) and take the first steps in developing a viable site-based management team. The re-creation of the SIP, was a start in merging the efforts of the staff, still divided and seeming to pursue different directions. The full faculty made a decision to include everyone on the SIP rather than working through selected representatives. "We finally learned that when we got into trouble was when we didn't all have the same information." The SIP membership elected an executive board, four teachers and the principal, who set the agenda and facilitate the meetings. All faculty members serve on one of five committees, formed through the SIP. The SIP represents only the certified staff at the school, and the administrator meets separately with classified personnel, although one educational assistant, an Academy participant, attends the SIP meetings. While SIP struggles with growing pains, an expectation of any new group, the fact of its creation is in part the result of the beliefs and strong personal commitment of individual Academy participants who continue the push for a truly restructured school.

As a result of the NMASL team plan, the integration of regular and special education continues in selected classrooms at the school as well as a continued emphasis on cultural diversity and building self esteem. The team reports that "good things are happening at the classroom level". The teams'

collective vision is visible in other places in the school community as well. Sometimes it is spearheaded by an Academy member, sometimes it is led by other staff whose focus is also children and their families.

One staff member, bent on developing inter-agency collaboration, established a contact with a ministerial alliance which provides community services. Service to Ann Parish families and their children include a clothing bank, gas coupons, dental services, employment assistance, and substance abuse treatment. In addition, this staff member asked teachers to donate packets of new children's underwear and socks to a school clothing bank. These donations are to be in lieu of presents staff members sometimes give each other as tokens of appreciation and support.

An Academy team member was one of the co-presidents of the teacher's union and through ideas of networking developed during the summer the union joined the local Chamber of Commerce. There is now one teacher from each school level serving on the Chamber's Education Committee. The Chamber membership supports families in need, and the NMASL team realized an important lesson as they work trying to establish networks with other agencies. Team members found that agencies seem to be able to respond to specific requests for assistance, rather than vague submissions for general support. They offer one piece of advice to others interested in pursuing collaborative projects with community agencies, "Be specific -- ask for what you really need."

The work described above is the result of individual efforts by Academy team members and a few other faculty. It is not the cohesive effort of a school staff embracing the idea of building a restructured school. In fact most change efforts have been stymied. One team member sums up the year,

> "My hopes and dreams have been shattered. We have never really been allowed to even explain in detail what we learned this summer. There have been many road-blocks thrown in our way. The Academy team has been given a bad name and blamed for the division in our staff."

Faculty members on the NMASL team requested transfers out of the school feeling that any substantive change which they envisioned for their school will not become a reality. The administration is not working from a shared agenda or from the school plan which the team developed during the summer, although the principal was a team member. This year has been a wrenching experience for many faculty and decisions to seek transfers, while

difficult and risk-laden, were made because of personal commitments to a different vision of schooling. Pain and frustration is clear in the voices of some;

> "Restructuring at this school site has 'failed' and I am not sure the needs of our children at risk will ever be met."
>
> "Despite the 'wringer' I've been through, I believe in the restructuring process; I believe in the shared dream and that I will have an opportunity to be a part of this elsewhere."
>
> "I have hopes that I can move to a school site where I can still share my experiences, hopes, and dreams with others who believe in children and place them as their number one priority. I know that restructuring does work, is a reality, and makes a difference in the lives of students."

Bayard Elementary School

Restructuring work at Bayard continues, although several team members report some frustration with the pace of their efforts. Learning patience has not always been easy; "We're only plowing fields and sowing seeds, I wanted to harvest the crop." Yet, participation and support is wide-spread among the staff, communication is open and the team reports "subtle differences in the thinking of the faculty as a whole." The Parent Advisory Council is alive and well, and has developed an off-shoot parent program for parents involved in a variety of jobs within the classroom. Teachers have a "keen awareness" of new programs trying a variety of new instructional and assessment strategies, resulting in "an increased focus throughout the school on building self-esteem." Innovative programs at Bayard Elementary are considered pilots for the district.

Efforts for the summer of 1991 will include school participation in the Currents program next year, the New Mexico portion of CHARTS. The Bayard team will focus on interdisciplinary, multi-age groupings for children involved in studies of local art and history, involving local artists. Additionally a team of five faculty will attend the New Mexico State Department of Education's summer institute on School Improvement and Restructuring. This project will culminate with a two day retreat where this

group and a group of parents will write an improvement plan for the school.

One of the jewels of the restructuring efforts at Bayard is the Home Liaison Program, *Mano a Mano,* (Hand in Hand). The program was developed by an Academy participant, the parent representative to the team who is also an educational assistant at the school. It is modeled after a similar Albuquerque program, *Juntos para los Niños,* (Together for Children) which was presented to the summer Academy. In Bayard the program provides in-home assistance to seven families and their kindergarten and first grade age children. The children are all from Spanish language dominant homes. The home liaison visits each family for an hour on a biweekly basis, and works with the child, reviewing and reinforcing concepts introduced in the classroom. In addition the liaison models language and shows parents and other family members how to work with their children. Materials are taken to each home and left for the week. Teachers from the school report, "The effect is direct and obvious" and they recommend that the program be expanded to include ten to twelve students next year. Parents also express their delight and gratitude for the support and help of the school and the friendship of the liaison, who provides help and support in other areas as well. One parent comments, "Bayard Elementary cares because you come to our house to help our children."

All members of the NMASL team comment of the success of the *Mano a Mano* program. The faculty is requesting the district support the program next year, paying an additional hour of salary per day plus mileage, and a nominal fee for materials and supplies. This year the liaison donates a half hour's time each day, plus the use of her car and fuel. At this writing it appears that district support is forthcoming to offset this staff member's personal expenses.

As the NMASL team reflects on the year and their work, one comment seems to summarize their feelings, "The influence of our work is probably (most obvious) in our attitudes and what we see as possibilities."

Chaparral Elementary

In the weeks following winter break work began at Chaparral on implementation of plans made by the NMASL team during the summer Academy. By the end of January, the group had completed two months of communications styles workshops trying to resolve personal differences. Reviews of that process showed mixed success; some members felt the process

to be personally helpful, others did not agree. Two team members formally withdrew from the team in January. Both felt more comfortable and more effective working as individuals and simply preferred not to be considered a part of the team. They continue working with the school faculty, using the expertise they developed over the summer to improve schooling for children. One participant remarked, "We didn't survive as a team, but still are five very committed people."

In February, all members of the Chaparral NMASL group joined efforts with the professional development school committee to plan an all school mini-conference which was held in April. The conference, like their earlier full day retreat, was a smashing success. It was held after school, on an early release day, and featured eight presentations in two sessions. The first session held during the duty day was attended by the entire staff and the second which began at dismissal time drew more than half the school faculty. The entire conference was the result of an in-house effort. It was planned through the joint efforts of the PDS committee and the Academy participants, all the presentations were made by faculty members, and the refreshments catered by an educational assistant. This form of staff development, offered by teachers for teachers is becoming typical of the professional development school effort in Albuquerque, where teachers are empowered to solve school problems, join in shared decision making, and assist their peers by offering information and talent from their areas of expertise.

Spring semester also saw the implementation of the "Lunch Bunch" the peer-tutoring project of one NMASL team member. Fourth and fifth graders tutor younger children during their lunch hour, a self-esteem building project and one which helps in skill consolidation. The pre-school story hour project, part of the original summer plan, was also implemented. It has resulted in faculty working together to increase community involvement, as well as involving parents and pre-schoolers in literacy activities. Both outcomes, increased parental involvement and the focus on increasing literacy were identified by the staff at the October retreat as areas which the staff wanted to address.

As one of the largest elementary schools in the district, Chaparral is involved in a study of year round education looking at a multi-track plan as one method of handling the large school population for the 1992-93 school year. Parents and staff, are working together to formulate a workable plan. A NMASL teacher tells us, "Our school is very involved in restructuring. I am very much a part of it. I love being in the middle of a hard working group."

While one Academy participant feels there was not any difference in the staff as the result of the summer experience, another feels that the cooperative work and success of Academy sponsored school-wide activities are "evidence that the objectives and thoughts from this summer might finally be happening." In this complex school situation it is hard to separate the pieces from the whole; to attribute activity and innovation to any one source. The staff is large, varied in philosophy, and stressed by size. Individual teachers are involved in innovative practice and a variety of reform efforts. Contributions to restructuring in this school emerge from a broad spectrum of ideas, the professional development school agenda, the special education side by side component, and the personal educational and leadership philosophies of strong staff members. In this school diverse ventures to improve education fuel and support each other and action by teachers is a fact of life. The school's guiding vision encourages involvement and acceptance of diversity. One teacher tells us, "We've refocused on children, we've been working on restructuring for four years - people come and go - and we still endure. Restructuring is slow, everyone takes it differently."

What will the future of the Academy initiative be in this school? Several participants feel that certain aspects of the restructuring effort will be continued by people other than NMASL participants and by different groups which are working in the school. One participant believes,

> "that individual programs instituted from the plan will be sustained by individuals, but sustaining the whole plan will be difficult."

Two themes reoccur as Academy participants reflect on this year and advise incoming teams; 1) have the school administrator committed to shared decision making and involved in the Academy, and 2) choose the team well and make sure that previous relationships do not bring problems to the group.

Emerson Elementary

As a result of their summer experience Emerson's NMASL team redesigned and streamlined the procedure for full staff involvement in the life of the school. But streamlined seems a glib description which does not accurately describe the intensity of their year. The Academy restructuring

plan and their subsequent merger with the professional development school initiative to form a leadership team did encourage and provide opportunities for full school staff participation. The end result was thoughtful and committed involvement by most people. Since participation precipitates action, Emerson staff had a busy year. They visited and shared their restructuring efforts with other schools, they worked hard on community involvement; increased parental involvement dramatically, and worked toward interagency collaboration. Several teachers became involved as teacher researchers in their own classrooms, collaborating with students from the university in an on-site research class. A few teachers worked with the university to provide placement for special education student teachers next year. Through all this activity something nebulous happened which is hard to attribute to any one cause and difficult to pin down. Emerson staff "seems happier, more relaxed, more willing to get involved, and pleased with the progress of the school."

The entire staff at Emerson are now living under the planning fire of a five-track, year-round education deadline. The 1991-92 conventional school calendar closes at the end of May. On July 22, the year round school calendar begins. The decision to "go year round" was made by the staff for the benefit of their students some faculty voting to go year round despite personal preferences to the contrary. Overcrowding entered into the decision, as did the pressing need of many children in their community.

As planning for year-round education became a reality, the Emerson leadership team decided to disband the eight committees which addressed the usual needs of their school and instituted seven new ones. Each committee was specifically designed to handle a planning facet for the new calendar. The committee structure designed at the Academy served them well in this effort and the staff has worked long and hard to meet their deadlines. The process of planning for year-round education has been a new experience for the staff. Teachers worked selflessly to be certain they met the needs of the school as a whole, trusted in each other to reach fair and equitable solutions, conceded on some issues and reach consensus on others. It has been a process of growth and education but it has been very tiring. Once again a school district asked teachers and staff to redesign the system while it is in motion. No extra time or compensation was made available.

Despite their exhaustion, participants say "the year has been a good one, although exhausting in its intensity." Some people are ready to step aside for a breather and let others experience the full weight of leadership. "Trust" is a

word used often among this Academy team. It results from colleagiality in everyday matters. It carries over to the on-going nature of work in this school where children are the central focus.

Professional Development School Efforts: Chaparral and Emerson

As well as being NMASL schools, Chaparral and Emerson carry professional development school designation. In that capacity both are involved in a collaborative venture with the district, the university and the union. In 1987 a joint planning committee conceptualized Professional Development Schools as contributing to the professionalization of teaching by involving teachers more centrally in the control of their work. In both schools shared decision making is an institutionalized process which works well. Additionally, Professional Development Schools are seen as schools where teachers engage in reflective practice and continuous inquiry about their work and the appropriateness of that practice to their school communities. In this effort teachers from both the schools are now engaged in discussion with the university about the possibilities and opportunities which year round school schedules offer to teacher education programs, to ongoing education for inservice teachers and staff development. It is a time of excitement, stimulation and imminent possibility for both the university and the schools as people look to joint efforts and strive to find ways to meet and serve each others' needs. One teacher remarked after a particularly productive meeting,

> "We have the chance in a life time to make a difference in education. Its based on a lot of collaborative history and trust and we know that if we try, the sky is the only limit we face."

Legion Park/Los Niños

The faculty and staff from Legion Park Elementary moved to Los Niños in August of 1991. Their team had just completed the summer Academy. The immediacy of children arriving to attend school in the newly completed but not completely functional building was daunting. And the team knew that staff members had to be brought to a new way of thinking about children and education, classes needed to be taught, parents needed to be involved, the community had to be contacted. And it all happened. Despite the sea of mud surrounding the school and the dust in the ventilating fans, despite

overcrowding and understaffing and the teams' feelings their thoughts were mostly "about the building," major changes were effected.

Armed with strong district support as well as a strong team commitment they forged a new educational philosophy and put it in place. Instead of Distar and schedules and timers they are focusing on children, modeling cooperation in the workplace, expecting children to work cooperatively and collaboratively, integrating the curriculum and inviting the parents and community into their school. James Comer's "no fault" policy was adopted for a working model in the district as the basis for fundamental restructuring and when the Academy team reflects on changes they all speak of living and working with new attitudes. Changes are evident at Los Niños and in schools throughout the district. The district is moving toward a shared decision making model and all teachers are involved on district-wide committees. The team and faculty from Los Niños are able to provide leadership and facilitation skills for these groups. One team member remarked on her political involvement saying,

> "Teachers need to be working outside of their classrooms, teachers need to be talking with teachers. We all have an equal right to have our needs met and to have our ideas and opinions heard."

While no one is claiming they have arrived, they are pleased with their work and able to enjoy the progress they are making toward the goal of restructured schools.

By the start of spring semester some of the building problems were conquered. Parents are now moving into working in the classrooms, and are well established in providing needed services on the playground and in the cafeteria. Parents are beginning to share their talent and to ask how they can help. When budget cuts eliminated the music program, parents picked up the slack. Parent volunteers now teach music in the classrooms on a regular basis.

A parent committee also mounted an enormous fund raising campaign for playground equipment. Through sales of candy, nuts, and cookies the group raised $33,000.00. Profit for the school stands at $13,000.00, enough for two large pieces of playground equipment. In addition the U.S. Forest Service is donating trees, approximately three hundred, to be planted as part of a school wide curricular unit centering around the environment. Parents

donated necessary sand and gravel, fencing and trenching for this wind break project. Students and a teacher at the high school are also involved in the playground initiative, designing and building additional playground equipment.

The staff at Los Niños contacted a community agency for help with the mental health needs of families in the school. Consejos, a community based mental help agency, is organizing parent meetings for school families. This interagency collaboration effort supports the school, supplementing the work of their half-time counselor. The staff finds the work is slow, drawing families in takes time and transportation is often a problem. Personal invitations have helped improve attendance at these meetings, now standing at six, up from none at the first session.

As the 1990-91 school year comes to a close the Los Niños staff is ready to make yet another move, this time back to the newly remodeled Legion Park Elementary. In August they will begin school in another new building, adding two grades as they become a K-5 school. The staff plan to meet weekly without compensation throughout the summer to develop curriculum and instructional strategies. In the fall each wing of the new school will house a "K-5 family" and the school will pilot multi-age class groupings within the plan. Faculty are excited about the plan and see it as a support to further integration of curriculum. They plan to enlisted the help of staff from the neighboring middle school which instituted the family plan at the beginning of the 1990-91 school year. This inter-school support is characteristic of a district committed openly and without reservation to many varieties of change.

As the Los Niños team reflects on the year and readies themselves for the challenges of new instructional strategies, a new school structure and a new facility, they remark,

> "We have to apply what we learned to our everyday lives, it has to be integral to the school. The days of sitting in our classrooms is over. We have to cooperate and model what we want to teach."

Tombaugh

It took the Tombaugh team, their faculty and staff three months of wrestling with their brand new facility before the kinks were ironed out. But

by the new year the team felt they could get on with the business of school. When the team talks about their year and relates what they are doing they talk about trust and vision and excitement. They speak of "a sense of purpose and direction for the school and the community."

The numbers of parents involved at Tombaugh has been high since the school opened. Parental involvement began in usual ways with the Parent Faculty Organization (PFO) and expanded as a large group of parents attended the before school retreat, learning about the NMASL experience and participating in writing a mission statement. In November, when the school's decision-making body, the Tombaugh Action Board (TAB), began meeting there was some uneasiness and confusion about the functions of the two bodies, the PFO and the TAB. A full complement of willing and involved parents put the Tombaugh faculty in an unusual position; how to harness, streamline and coordinate the efforts of widespread parental support. Part of the team's effort during the spring went to unravelling communication difficulties among the groups and to looking at reconfiguring the Action Board. Together they have designed one governing body for the school, reapportioned membership and written job descriptions for all positions.

A survey has been used to assess school climate and assist in the planning for the coming year. Parents, teachers and students will all be surveyed and the results will be used by the TAB as they work toward developing appropriate plans and directions. Teams have also been established to study short and long term goals for the school.

Parental involvement this year has expanded to include an after school enrichment program which provides time for in-depth study on projects in areas of interest and choice. This spring eight enrichment sessions are offered but plans for next year will expand the program, providing sessions before and after school and adding to their offerings.

Forty parents will be taking a bilingual computer class at Tombaugh this summer. The class will be taught by three staff members. The focus is on computer literacy skills, parents as computer lab assistants and helping parents learn to work with children.

Combining a variety of restructuring foci has helped institute various new strategies and programs at Tombaugh; individual student needs; the Re:Learning theme of student as worker, parental involvement and community resources as a means of providing equitable and meaningful education for children, and interagency collaboration. The volunteer social work intern program, developed in the fall with the local university, is

expected to continue. The social worker provides teachers with extra help in meeting counseling needs as well as support for Children are People, a self-esteem building program.

Alternative assessment is becoming a viable alternative in many classrooms and at several grade levels. Teachers are using portfolio assessment for writing and language arts. They developed a checklist for student exhibitions and made a videotape of several teachers showing examples of alternative assessment methods. Second through fourth graders have been involved in exhibitions of their work in science and social studies.

Tombaugh teachers are using Writer's Workshop as an in-class model for special education inclusion in the language arts curriculum. Author's Night, a school-wide function, provides children an opportunity to read to their parents from their own work, developing self esteem as well as purpose and enjoyment in their work.

One team member in special education, has written her own curriculum for functional education for her severely involved students. All support services are provided to her children within the classroom. This program is being expanded next year and an additional classroom will be added to serve the district's children.

Grades one through four are involved in a program dubbed "MALT" or Multi-age Learning Time. This year the children meet together in their MALT groups for one hour each week, working on interdisciplinary projects. Next year one MALT team will expand their work together and meet for one hour each day.

Restructuring efforts ripple throughout Tombaugh. The summer will bring little rest for some Tombaugh teachers, many of whom will continue to be involved in school activities. The Tombaugh staff also plans to meet voluntarily over the summer to provide the necessary ground work for their continued efforts. Teachers focus on differing aspects depending on their talents, interests and comfort level, but children are always central to their work.

> "We've become advocates for children," one teacher said. "We have a more global view of where children are and how to prepare them for the future. This is a destination that we will strive to get to but it will always be changing."

Conclusion

Participation in the New Mexico Academy for School Leaders has been a powerful experience for the staff from the six elementary schools. As they reflect on a year of involvement in restructuring work the responses are uniformly positive about their personal and professional growth. They offer sophisticated evaluations of where and why their efforts were successful as well as thoughtful and heartfelt analysis of where things went wrong. Personal growth and professional commitment are also the result of unsuccessful circumstances.

A year of situation specific work, wrestling with problems of moment and consequence for their schools and their students, has developed skills in leadership and facilitation and habits of mind which allows thoughtful action, supports risk-taking, and builds mutual trust and appreciation. In situations where fundamental change seems problematic, teams members focus on alternatives which provide them professional ways to continue to benefit children through their restructuring work.

Mutual support and enhancement from multiple educational initiatives in New Mexico makes direct results of restructuring work of the NMASL hard to pinpoint. The efforts of professional development schools in Albuquerque, well under way in both schools, provided a basis for shared decision-making and reinforcement for new work in on-going professional education. The Re:Learning project and Currents (New Mexico CHARTS), both well established endeavors in school reform, provided Academy participants with additional information, strategies, initiatives and cohort groups in the change process. Restructuring efforts by the Academy and the other school initiatives can be viewed as both causes and catalysts, each reinforcing the results of the others.

When NMASL teams speak about their developing leadership skills they talk about modeling the methods they wish faculty in their schools to develop; equality in decision-making, being available to listen and respond to peers, assurances that people's ideas and opinions will be heard, building self-esteem throughout the school community, patience, and acceptance of diversity. Becoming school leaders caused some concern for some participants at first, mostly because of the newness of the role. Leadership happened slowly as a real need arose or in the context of problem solutions or in peer support or in disagreement and conflict. Sometimes it grew out of

casual conversation, a request from a staff member about some facet of the summer experience or a direct request for information about an innovative strategy. Practice in leading and practice in analyzing contextualized events provides the participants with a variety of well consolidated skills which they now use naturally and comfortably. In some cases the strength of a team effort had an impact on the schools, in others the ventures of individuals was central in effecting change.

The emphasis on personal development continues to be strong. Participants remark on their ability to build trust in their schools, to make well thought out decisions because of an expanded knowledge base. One teacher tells us, "This program makes you search inside ourself and find out what you really value in life and stretches your abilities in many areas."

The final assessment of the Academy by the participants reflects the human dimensions of any group and a microcosm of our society. NMASL participants wish to change those things which as integral parts of society today make schools difficult places to work; which make restructuring both imperative and tricky. Teachers need time -- to think and plan, to work colleagially and in a sustained way. Some feel the NMASL restructuring effort is worth the time commitment, a few feel the level of stress has been very high. Teams would like better availability of resources and more pay, more administrative support and less distance between the university and the schools. Some participants need better skills for conflict resolution, others are able to disagree because of the trust they developed in the group process. Teachers agonize over children whose lives are filled with need and wonder how they will find the time and support and the people who might help. Academy teams would like to see broader support for restructuring, "people walking their talk." Some teachers had their hopes and dreams shattered, while others feel personally and professionally rewarded. Generally, people respond that they feel revitalized, more confident, more aware and changed in outlook about schooling.

Where will the NMASL schools go from here and what will the next year bring? The resounding answer is that this is a journey with an ever changing destination. Teams and their schools will need new and different support for their efforts, the people involved will change but the ideas will endure. Participants feel the effort will expand and they may reach out for other ideas or other sites which complement and sustain their work and we already see the network broadening.

As teams develop their specific talents and share with others across schools, a kind of on-going loop of staff development is beginning to grow. A

teacher from one school provides a specific inservice for another staff and teachers gladly try the new strategy. One teacher from that school casually describes her school's decision making process to a friend in another school and the process will soon be replicated. An elementary school staff calls in neighboring middle school teachers and asks for advice in implementing a new program. A team of teachers visit a school which is beginning to talk about restructuring, to listen, talk, and share experiences. Teachers join university faculty to begin discussion about new site based teacher education programs. The loops of professional development are expanding and restructuring takes on wider meaning for many NMASL team members. Over the year participants have told us,

> "We will sustain this effort. There is no going back. We have dreamed a good dream ... and we are forever changed."

NEW MEXICO
ACADEMY
FOR SCHOOL
LEADERS

CURRICULUM OUTLINE

NEW MEXICO ACADEMY FOR SCHOOL LEADERS

SUMMER 1990

JULY 8 - AUGUST 3, 1990

STAFF

DAVID COLTON, DIRECTOR

ROBERTA SMITH, PROJECT COORDINATOR

BUREAU OF EDUCATIONAL PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION - UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO
ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO 87131

SPONSORED BY THE ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION

INTRODUCTION

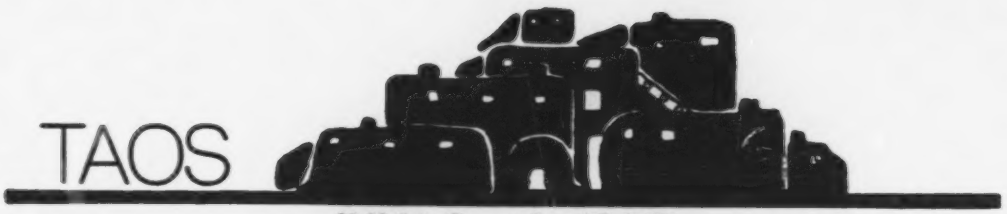
Educators and policy makers in New Mexico are aware that far too many at-risk children do poorly in school, drop out, or perform poorly even if they graduate. There is broad awareness among school personnel and citizens that appropriate education for children at risk requires fundamental change in the ways schools operate. School personnel must operate as teams, within the school and the community, not as isolated individuals. School sites have to be the focus of initiative and responsibility. To implement these changes requires vision, leadership and skilled use of change strategies. The New Mexico Academy for School Leaders is designed to assist school building level leadership teams who will guide the process of site-by-site change. The Academy program is attuned to the unique features of individual schools, and rests upon proven approaches to organizational change.

Cadres of leaders will be formed to develop plans to implement fundamental change in the educational programs and structure at each school site. The issues of multiculturalism and at-risk students will be the principal focus of the restructuring process. These internal leadership teams will be trained as both visionaries and facilitators, for leaders with vision are unsuccessful if they cannot find ways to facilitate the inculcation of vision in others, and to help them act upon it. But facilitators without vision also are ineffective if they merely induce a process which results in good feelings and no change. The New Mexico Academy will concentrate on developing both sets of skills.

The 1990 Summer Academy is composed of leadership teams of 5-6 members from each of 6 schools. The teams are composed of teachers, administrators, parents and community members.

The Academy's first week will focus on training in group process and facilitation skills and a deepening and broadening of the participant understanding of kids at risk. The James Comer Model for addressing the needs of at-risk students will be explained. The second week focuses on cultural issues in the educational setting and parent and community involvement in the schools. Week three will be devoted to the concept of site-based management in the restructuring process and instructional strategies known to be successful with at-risk students. The last week of the Academy will begin with intensive training in the leadership skills and school change strategies needed to implement a school improvement plan. The final days will see the teams developing their individual school plans.

The post-Academy activities will consist of follow-up assistance by Academy staff and consultants and both formative and summative evaluation procedures designed to describe and assess the impact of Academy training.



JULY 8 - 13, 1990

JULY 8, SUNDAY

3-6 PM	Check In	
5:30 PM	Reception - D. H. Lawrence Room #606	
7:00 PM	Dinner - Ernie Blake Room	
	Introductions:	Dave Colton, Principal Investigator, New Mexico Academy for School Leaders
	Invocation:	Alejandro R. Lujan, Lt. Governor-Taos Pueblo
	Welcome:	Hugh Price, Vice-President, The Rockefeller Foundation

JULY 9 MONDAY

7:30	Breakfast in the meeting room	
8:00	Welcome and Housekeeping Business:	Dave Colton
	Registration forms, etc.	Bobbie Smith
8:30	Team Process training, leadership skills	Barry Cooney
	Journal writing/reflections*	Bonnie Page
12:00	Lunch - in the dining room(banquet style)	
1:00	Facilitation Skills	Barry Cooney Bonnie Page Linda O'Neal
3:00	Reflections	
4:00	Free Time	
7:00	Dinner	

JULY 10 TUESDAY

7:30	Breakfast in the meeting room	
8:00	Creative Problem Solving	Barry Cooney Bonnie Page
11:30	Participation Presentation**	
12:00	Lunch - in the dining room	
1:00	Special Education and the At-Risk Child	Bonnie Page Jim Alarid
3:00	Reflections - Energizers	
3:30	Case Studies shared	Participants
5:00	Free Evening and dinner on your own	

* Journal writing and reflections will be interposed throughout the entire Academy.

** Each of the participants will make a presentation sometime during the four weeks.

JULY 11, WEDNESDAY

7:30	Breakfast in the meeting room	
8:00	Participant Presentation - "Substance Abuse Lesson"	Marie Heitman
8:30	Characteristics of at-risk students	Caroline Gaston Bernadette Nevarez
11:30	Reflections and team activity(who are the at-risk of our school community?)	
12:00	Lunch - in the dining room	
1:00	Drugs, Gangs and the At-Risk Child	Danny Trujillo
3:00	Reflections	Ralph Kemp
3:30	Bayard team dance	
4:00	Free evening and dinner on your own	

JULY 12, THURSDAY

7:30	Breakfast in the meeting room	
8:00	Participant Presentation	
8:30	Dr. James Comer's Model - School and Community - Mental Health teams in the Schools Reflections - Energizers	Jan Stocklinski Ken Kelly Dr. Ed Joyner
12:00	Lunch in the dining room	
1:00	Continuation of Comer Model Presentation	
3:30	Reflections and team meetings	
4:00	Free Time	
7:00	Dinner - in the meeting room	

JULY 13 FRIDAY

7:30	Breakfast in the meeting room	
8:00	Democratic Learning System Reflections	Dr. Maria Chavez
10:30	Teacher Presentation - "Self-Concept Activity"	Victoria Winter
11:30	Lunch in the dining room	
12:30	Team meetings	
2:00	Leave for home	

LAS CRUCES

JULY 15 -20, 1990

JULY 15	SUNDAY	
	Check In anytime after 3	
	Dinner on your own	
8:00	Team Representative meeting	
JULY 16	MONDAY	
	Breakfast in the dining room	
8:00	Cultural Diversity and the At-Risk Child	Ma'lu Gonzales
	Reflections and Energizers	
10:00	Networking-Linking Schools With the Community	Gayla Lawson
	Reflections and Energizers	
11:30	Lunch - "Chants and Art"	Joan McDaniel
12:30	Networking continued	Gayla Lawson
	Reflections	
3:00	Free Time	
7:00	Dinner - Speaker, Barbara Simmons Dean, College of Education New Mexico State University	
JULY 17	TUESDAY	
7:00	Breakfast in the dining room	
8:00	Successful Involvement of Parents in their Children's Education	Frances Guzman
11:00	Reflections and Energizers	
11:30	Lunch - Participant Presentation "Story-telling"	Becky Scanlon
12:30	Continuation of Parent Involvement	Frances Guzman
3:45	Reflections and Energizers	
4:00	Role Alike Meeting	
5:00	Free evening	

JULY 18	WEDNESDAY	
7:00	Breakfast in the dining room	
8:00	Parent Involvement workshop	Joe Gonzales
10:15	Reflections and Energizers	
10:30	Participant Presentation "Writers Workshop"	Frances Campbell Judy Zimmerman
11:30	Lunch - Participant Presentation "Symbol Reading"	N'Anne Smith
12:30	Roots and Wings - Interactive project for children, Community and Cultural Awareness	Eileen Grevey
3:45	Reflections	
4:00	Free time	
5:00	Free evening	
JULY 19	THURSDAY	
7:00	Breakfast in the dining room	
8:00	Involvement of Community Social Services in the schools-History and Strategies Reflections and Energiziers	Maria Chavez
9:00	Team Planning meeting	
10.00	Gregoric-Mind Styles	Dave Colton
11:00	Report to Group	
12:00	Lunch	
1:00	Panel discussion with Federal, State and Local representatives of Human Services and Education	Martin Gerry Al Morgan Al Valdez, & others
2:00	Questions and answers from participants Reflections and Energizers	
2:30	Team meetings and report to the group	
3:00	Free Time	
7:00	Dinner	
JULY 20	FRIDAY	
7:00	Breakfast in the dining room	
8:00	Cultural Sensitivity in the Curriculum and in the Classroom Environment	Joe Suina
10:45	Reflections and Energizers	
11:30	Lunch	
1:00	Participant Presentation "African-American Experience in the Curriculum"	Debra Johns
2:00	Team meetings to work on plan: parent, social services special programs	
2:30	Report to the group	
3:00	Leave for home	

ALBUQUERQUE

JULY 23 - 27, 1990

JULY 22	SUNDAY	
	Check in - Anytime after 3	
	Dinner on your own	
8:00	Team Representative meeting	
JULY 23	MONDAY	
6:00	Breakfast in the dining room	
8:00	Restructuring	Sheldon McGuire
11:00	Team meetings and Reflections	
11:30	Lunch Participant Presentation "Comparing English & American Schools	Lucille Stanfield
1:00	Sweeney Elementary School Restructuring Plan	Sandra Purrington
3:30	Reflections	
4:00	Free time	
7:00	Dinner - Speaker Dr. Jack Bobroff, Superintendent of Albuquerque Public Schools	
JULY 24	TUESDAY	
6:00	Breakfast in the dining room	
8:00	The Principal and Site Based Management	Steve Wilkes
10:30	Participant Presentation"Multisensory Techniques in Teaching Spelling"	Elie Van Arsdale
11:30	Team meeting and Energizers	
12:00	Lunch	
1:00	Participant Presentation - "Right Brain People"	Julia Cutler-Delzer Yolanda Denny
2:00	Mentoring	Breda Bova
3:45	Reflections	
4:00	Free time	
6:00	Dinner on your own	
JULY 25	WEDNESDAY	
6:00	Breakfast in the dining room	
8:00	Participant Presentation "Creative Writing"	Lucille Baca Frances Gallegos
8:30	Cooperative Learning	Kathleen McVickers
11:30	Team meeting and reflections	
12:00	Lunch	
1:00	Participant Presentation "Behavorial Techniques"	Susan Armistead
1:30	Participant Presentation "Assertive Discipline"	Michael Nuanes

JULY 25	WEDNESDAY - Continued	
2:00	Team Meeting	
2:30	Participant Presentation "Peer Tutoring"	Joyce Dax
3:00	Reflections	
3:30	Free Time	
6:30	Barbeque by the pool with the Charts people	
JULY 26	THURSDAY	
6:00	Breakfast in the dining room	
8:00	Computers in the Classroom	Paul Resta Paul Warnke
11:35	Reflections and Energizers	
12:00	Lunch on your own	
1:00	Computers in the Classroom continued Reflections	
3:30	Free Time	
6:00	Dinner on your own	
JULY 27	FRIDAY	
6:00	Breakfast in the dining room	
8:00	New Approaches to Assessing Children's Progress	Richard Sterling
11:30	Lunch(Reflections and Energizers Built In)	
12:30 - 3:00	New Approaches continued	
3:30	Leave for home	

JULY 30 - AUG. 3, 1990

JULY 29	SUNDAY	
	Check in - Anytime after 3	
	Dinner on your own	
8:00	Team Representative meeting	
JULY 30	MONDAY	
6:00	Breakfast in the dining room	
8:00	Departure for Las Vegas High School Library	
8:30	School Improvement Process - Understanding and Skills for Action, Experimentation and Monitoring of School-Based Plans	Shirley Hord and team
11:30	Lunch on your own	
12:30	School Improvement Plan continued	
4:00	Return to hotel	
4:00	Free time	
7:00	Dinner - Guest speaker, Carlos Atencio, Superintendent, Las Vegas City Schools	
JULY 31	TUESDAY	
6:00	Breakfast in the dining room	
8:00	Departure for Las Vegas High School Library	
8:30	School Improvement Process-Part II	Shirley Hord
11:30	Lunch on your own	
12:30	Participant Presentation "Energize"	Barbara Lucero
1:00	School Improvement Plan continued	
3:30	Free time - Dinner on your own	
AUGUST 1	WEDNESDAY	
6:00	Breakfast in the dining room	
8:00	Half day - Becoming "Trainers of Trainers"	Shirley Hord
12:00	Lunch on your own	
1:00	Grant Writing Workshop	Carolyn Gaston Laura Threet
4:00	Free Time - dinner on your own	

AUGUST 2	THURSDAY	
6:00	Breakfast in the dining room	
8:00	Work on plan all day	Mike Milstein
12:00	Lunch on your own	
1:00	Work on plan	
4:00	Free Time	
7:00	Dinner in the dining room	

AUGUST 3	FRIDAY
6:00	Breakfast in the dining room
8:00	Teams present Plans
12:00	Lunch in the dining room (Present certificates)
1:00 - 3:00	Follow-up planning

PRESENTERS

James Alarid, Chair
Department of Education
New Mexico Highlands University
Las Vegas, New Mexico 87701
(505)425-7511

Breda Bova, Associate Professor
Educational Administration
College of Education
University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87131
(505)277-4533

Maria Chavez, Program Director
Early Childhood Development
College of Education
University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87131
(505)277-5849

Barry Cooney, President
Alliance for Creative Management
7200 Montgomery, NE Suite 381
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87109
(505)828-1117

Caroline Gaston
Student Success Advocate
Albuquerque Public Schools
725 University Boulevard, SE
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87106
(505)842-4696

Joseph Gonzales, Director
Multicultural Educational Materials Collection
Room 125 - College of Education
University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87131
(505)277-7260

Ma'lu Gonzales
Department of Educational Management
Box 30001 Department 3N
New Mexico State University
Las Cruces, New Mexico 88003
(505)646-5425

Eileen Grevey
Educational Consultant
6401 Caballero Parkway, NE
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87107
(505)344-7636

Frances Guzman
Intercultural Development Research Association
5835 Callaghan Suite 350
San Antonio, Texas 78228
(512)684-8180

Shirley Hord
Southwest Educational Development Laboratory
211 E. 7th Street
Austin, Texas 78701
(512)476-6861

Ken Kelly
Prince George County Public Schools
14201 School Lane
Upper Marlboro, Maryland 20772
(301)952-6357

Ralph Kemp
Special Force for Gang Violence
Albuquerque Police Department
401 Marquette, NW
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87102
(505)768-1986

Gayla Lawson
Educational Consultant
123 Top o' the Lake
Austin, Texas 78734
(512)261-7002

Sheldon McGuire(Retired Principal)
516 Nicklaus SW
Rio Rancho, New Mexico 87124
(505)892-3135

Kathleen McVickers, Director
Educational Resource and Renewal
3315 Louisiana Boulevard, NE
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87110
(505)884-4983

Mike Milstein, Chair
Department of Educational Administration
College of Education
University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87131
(505)277-7267

Sylvia Mendez Morse
Southwest Educational Development Laboratory
211 E. 7th Street
Austin, Texas 78701
(512)476-6861

Bernadette Nevarez
620 18th Street, NW
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87104
(505)842-0826

Linda O'Neal
San Antonio NEISD
10333 Broadway
San Antonio, Texas 78211
(512)657-8652

Bonnie Page
Department of Educational Administration
College of Education
University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87131
(505)277-3943

Sandra Purrington, Facilitator
Sweeney Elementary School
Airport Road
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501
(505)989-5501

Paul Resta
Department of Educational Foundations
University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87131
(505)277-7310

Richard Sterling, Director
Institute for Literacy Studies
Lehman College, City Colllege of New York
Bronx, New York 10468

Jan Stocklinski
Prince George County Public Schools
14201 School Lane
Upper Marlboro, Maryland 20772
(301)952-6357

Joseph Suina, Assistant Professor
College of Education, CIMTE
University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87131
(505)277-7781

Laura Threet, Director
Albuquerque Community Foundation
6400 Uptown Boulevard, NE
Suite 500-W
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87110
(505)883-6240

Danny Trujillo
Drug-Free Schools and Community
Department of Education
Education Building
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501-2786
(505)827-6568

Steve Wilkes, Principal
Chaparral Elementary School
6325 Milne Road, NW
Albuquerque, New Mexico
(505)831-3301

SPECIAL GUESTS

Carlos Atencio, Superintendent
Las Vegas City Public Schools
901 Douglas Avenue
Las Vegas, New Mexico 87701
(505)425-5278

Jack Bobroff, Superintendent
Albuquerque Public Schools
725 University Boulevard, SE
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87106
(505)842-3633

Martin Gerry, Assistant Secretary of
Planning and Evaluation
U. S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue SW
Room 415F
Washington, D. C. 20201
(202)245-1858

Ray Heath
Sandia National Laboratories
Organization 9012
P.O. Box 5800
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87185-5800
(505)846-5170

Dr. Robert Hendren
Director, Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
University of New Mexico Medical School
2400 Tucker, N
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87131
(505)277-4002

Robert Huelskamp
Sandia National Laboratories
Organization 9012
P.O. Box 5800
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87185-5800
(505)846-0658

Ed Joyner
Yale Child Study Center
P.O. Box 3333
New Haven, Connecticut 06510
(203)785-2548

Gene Maeroff
Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching
5 Ivy Lane
Princeton, New Jersey 08540
(609)452-1780

James Montoya, Director
Office of Human Services
P.O. Box 16227
Las Cruces, New Mexico 88004
(505)524-6400

Al Morgan
Superintendent of Public Instruction
State Department of Education
Education Building
West DeVargas and Don Gaspar Street
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501-2786
(505)827-6516

Hugh Price
The Rockefeller Foundation
1133 Avenue of the Americas
New York, New York 10036
(212)869-8614

Barbara Simmons, Dean
College of Education
New Mexico State University
Box 3AC
Las Cruces, New Mexico 88003-0029
(505)646-3403

Marla Ucelli
The Rockefeller Foundation
1133 Avenue of the Americas
New York, New York 10036
(212)869-8500 x472

Al Valdez, Secretary
Department of Human Services
State of New Mexico
P.O. 2348
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87504-2348
(505)827-4072